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HENRY III.

KING OF FRANCE AND POLAND:

HIS COURT AND TIMES.

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BY

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AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF MARGUERITE D'ANGOULÊME,"

"ELIZABETH DE VALOIS AND THE COURT OF PHILIP II."

&c. &c.

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From a Portrait in the Bibliotheque Imperiale.

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HENRY III. KING OF FRANCE:

HIS COURT AND TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

1551—1569.

Henri duc d'Anjou—His birth and baptism—Youth of the duke—Sojourn at St. Germain—His early education—Political events—Character of the duc d'Anjou—Interview of Bayonne—Dissension between the duke and the prince de Condé—Enterprise of Meaux—Battle of St. Denis—Elevation of the duke to the office of lieutenant-general of the realm—Peace of Chartres—Renewal of hostilities—Battle of Jarnac—Renée de Châteauneuf—Marguerite de Valois—Interview of Plessis-les-Tours—Charles IX.—Battle of Moncontour—Bravery of M. d'Anjou—Departure of king Charles and the court for the camp of St. Jean d'Angely—Marguerite de Valois and the duc de Guise—Their relations—Hostility of the duc d'Anjou—Illness of the princess Marguerite—Removal of king Charles from St. Jean to Angers.

Henri de Valois, third surviving son of Henry II., king of France, and of Catherine de Medici, was born at Fontainebleau September 18th, 1551. The infant prince on the day of his birth was created duc d'Anjou and de Valois, and invested with the order of St. Michael. As the birth of Henry happened when the king his father was engaged in war against Pope Julius III. for the defence of Ottavio Farnese and the maintenance of the rights of the latter on the duchies of Parma and Piacenza, the baptism of the young prince was cele-

brated with little splendour. The ceremony was performed almost privately, in the chapel of the Holy Trinity of Fontainebleau, in the presence of the king, the queen, and a few chosen courtiers. The sponsors of the prince were Edward VI., king of England, Antoine de Bourbon and Jeanne d'Albret, king and queen of Navarre.[1] The extraordinary splendour which had been displayed at the christening of the second son of the king, Louis duke of Orleans, in 1549, at St. Germain-en-Laye, having been attended with fatal consequences to the infant prince—who died a few days after the solemnity from the effects of a chill taken while being handed from one state functionary to another—the queen submitted the more readily to the comparative absence of pomp with which her new-born son was received into the bosom of the church. The Parisians, nevertheless, demonstrated their loyalty by a general illumination. The municipal authorities gave a dole of bread to the poor of the city, as great dearth prevailed everywhere over France,—a misery still further augmented by the burden of war; and the rigorous persecutions which had followed the promulgation of the edict of Chateaubriand against the adherents of Calvin. Wine was also freely distributed; and the citizens regaled by a display of fireworks on a grand scale in the Place facing the Hôtel de Ville.[2]

At the period of the birth of the duc d'Anjou, Henry II. and Catherine were the parents of four children: the dauphin Francis, Charles duke of Orleans afterwards Charles IX., and the princesses Elizabeth and Claude. All these royal children, with Mary Stuart

[1] Godefroy: Grand Cérémonial de France, t. ii. The baptismal name of the young prince was Alexandre Edouard; but the queen, on the confirmation of her son, changed the appellation to Henry, by which name he had always been designated after the decease of the king of England.

[2] Ibid. Marlot: Théâtre d'Honneur.

queen of Scotland, and the young duc de Lorraine, resided at St. Germain, with their tutors and governesses —the ancient château of Francis I. being assigned for their exclusive occupation. The year following the nativity of the duc d'Anjou, queen Catherine gave birth, May 14th, 1552, at Châlons-sur-Marne, to her daughter Marguerite, whose eventful history is closely connected with that of her brother Henry.

The health of prince Henry for some time after his birth remained precarious. He suffered from a stoppage in the nose, which occasioned the royal physicians alarm. The queen watched over her child's health with the greatest solicitude; for from the first hour of his birth Catherine lavished on her son Henry tokens of the most tender maternal care. The infant prince constantly accompanied her wherever she journeyed; and Catherine was often heard to express her intention of bringing up this son as "her own." "M. le dauphin and his young brother Charles duc d'Orléans," the queen said, "appertain to the state, their education being superintended by the king and his council." The prince is described when in his second year by the Venetian ambassador Cappello,[1] as "a pretty child, but having some impediment in his speech which injured his pronunciation." When Henry had nearly accomplished his third year, he was assailed with a malady that threatened to destroy the infantine beauty of which the queen felt so proud. A malignant ulcer appeared on his face, which long resisted the skill of the famed physician Jean Fernel; while the general health of the little sufferer became so impaired as to occasion great fear of a fatal result. The science of Fernel, however, at length healed the wound without leaving trace of a scar behind; and under his care Henry slowly recovered. In

[1] Tommasio: Relations des Ambassadeurs Vénétiens sur les Affaires de France au 16ème Siècle—Relation de Giovanni Cappello.

1555, when the duc d'Anjou had attained his fourth year, he was taken from the care of his governess madame de Curton, and sent to Catherine's nursery establishment at St. Germain. The annals of this little court at St. Germain are full of interest. The children, male and female, of some of the highest nobility of France were being there educated with the princes in all manly and courtly accomplishments. They were called *les enfans d'honneur de messieurs les princes et de mesdames les princesses.* At one time this illustrious circle was composed of more than one hundred and fifty children. The state governess of the princesses was the maréchale de la Marck, daughter of the duchesse de Valentinois,[1] the king's mistress, who throughout this reign exercised almost sovereign sway: "for," says a contemporary historian, "all that was performed by Henry II. was done by the permission and good pleasure of Madame, and mon Compère"[2]—Henry always calling the constable de Montmorency by this last appellation, while madame de Valentinois was flattered, to the infinite indignation of Catherine de Medici, with the title of "Madame"—a distinction which rightfully appertained to the queen's eldest daughter Elizabeth. The governor of the three princes was M. d'Humières, a very gallant and accomplished cavalier. Their subpreceptors were MM. de Cipierre, Carnavalet, Bourdillon, and Corbinelli. The dauphin and his betrothed, Mary queen of Scotland, presided over this infantine court; and once a day, accompanied by the rest of the royal children, they received the homage of their companions. Here Mary early learned the power of her bewitching smiles as the young cavaliers approached to

[1] Diane de Poitiers, duchesse de Valentinois, widow of the comte de Maulevrier, grand sénéchal of Normandy, and daughter of the comte de St. Vallier, attainted for participation in the treason of the constable de Bourbon.

[2] Histoire Particulière de la Cour de Henri II.—Par Claude de l'Aubéspine.

kiss her hand. Sometimes the assemblage was enlivened by a performance on the lute, a learned recitation—or, occasionally, Mary and the princess Elizabeth regaled their hearers by a sage dissertation, or an oration pronounced in one of the learned tongues. "The little court of St. Germain-en-Laye was a true school of chivalry and knightly culture," says a contemporary chronicle.[1] "When monseigneur the dauphin and that brilliant band of nobles, his companions, began to grow from childhood, they had masters to teach them to dance, to leap, and to shoot; also others who instructed them in the culture of letters, music, mathematics, and painting. Neither were the useful arts neglected; nor yet the learned sciences, as became such illustrious scholars." The education of prince Henry was specially entrusted by the queen to her countryman Corbinelli and to M. de Carnavalet; he also received daily instruction from Luigi Alemanni, another *protégé* of the queen. Henry, however, showed no aptitude for study. In the acquirement of courtly accomplishments he excelled; while his boyish gallantry and handsome face rendered him a very popular personage amongst the little dames assembled at St. Germain. The afternoons were diversified, sometimes by riding parties in the park of St. Germain, when each young noble gallantly escorted a lady; at others, the cavaliers went out on horseback alone, attended by their governors, "when marvellous were the delectable enterprises, skirmishes, and ambuscades which then took place." Manly games served as additional recreations—such as tennis, quoits, running at the ring. The wits, and the chief promoters of fun and *espièglerie* were three young

[1] La Vie, Mort, et Tombeau de Philippe de Strozzi, Colonel-Général de l'Infanterie Française—Par H. T. S. de Torsay, où on voit la bonne et généreuse nourriture de la jeune noblesse Française sous les rois Henri et François II., 1608—A Paris.

cavaliers of the dauphin's band, the lords of la Rocheposé, Feuquières, and de Refuge. Scarcely a month passed, it is related, without there being some frolic of ingenious description invented by these young lords for the entertainment of the juvenile court. Sometimes a number of cavaliers assumed the garb of knights-errant, and enacted a scene taken from the pages of some romance of chivalry, such as 'Amadis de Gaul,' 'King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table,' 'Roland le Furieux,' or 'Giron le Courtois.' Each young cavalier had a suit of armour in his coffers, which he donned at the command of the dauphin. Occasionally the king and queen took up their abode for a season at St. Germain, when great was the revelry and gorgeous the pageants enacted.[1]

The establishment at St. Germain-en-Laye was broken up on the marriage, in 1558, between the dauphin and Mary Stuart. Madame Claude and the duc de Lorraine were next espoused; an alliance which was followed in 1559 by that of Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Catherine and Henry, with Philip II., king of Spain. The young duc d'Anjou, who had only completed his eighth year, was then sent to the castle of Amboise, where Marguerite de Valois and the duc d'Alençon,[2] the infant son of the queen, were residing, under the charge of madame de Curton. These royal children were at Amboise when the catastrophe of the tourney of the rue St. Antoine happened, which deprived them of their royal father Henry II., who fell, accidentally smitten by the lance of Montgomery.

[1] La Vie, Mort, et Tombeau du Haut et Puissant Seigneur Philippe de Strozzi.

[2] François de Valois, duc d'Alençon, born March 18th, 1554. The young prince first received the name of Hercules from his godfather duke Ercole II., husband of Renée de France, aunt of King Henry II. At his confirmation the prince relinquished the name and took that of François.

During the following sixteen months which comprised the brief reign of Francis II., the duc d'Anjou remained at Amboise. The factions of the court, religious and political, entirely monopolized the attention of queen Catherine. The power which the queen supremely prized she beheld passing from her hand to that of the duc de Guise.[1] It was the object of the latter to crush heresy—to annihilate the leaders of the Calvinist party, even though they might be princes of the blood royal; to perfect a close alliance with the king of Spain; and, finally, to establish the sovereignty of Francis II. over a realm Catholic, united, and loyal. Catherine, on the other hand, as queen-dowager, had no claim nor pretence to dominate over the council of her son: any control she there exercised must result from superior capacity and dexterous achievements. The more perilous, therefore, the condition of affairs, the higher would the queen's administrative knowledge be appreciated. Catherine's approval and countenance had first maintained the duc de Guise and his brother the cardinal de Lorraine in the posts which they occupied in the cabinet of Francis II. Favoured by the queen Mary Stuart, trusted by Francis II., whose inexperience found support in the ready resource and eloquence of his ministers, and encouraged by the powerful countenance of Philip II., king of Spain, the Guises, elated by their success, soon forgot the deference owing to the mother of their sovereign. To preserve her power, and to compel respect from the princes of Lorraine, Catherine established secret relations with the opposing Calvinist faction, headed by the princes of Bourbon and the nephews of the constable de Mont-

[1] François de Lorraine, duc de Guise, son of Claude duc de Guise, and of Antoinette de Bourbon. The duke married Anne d'Este, daughter of Ercole duc de Ferrara, and of Renée de France, daughter of Louis XII. and Anne de Bretagne.

morency. Nevertheless, had the life of Francis II. been prolonged, the doctrines of the Reformation probably would have been crushed throughout France; and the supporters of heresy exiled from the realm, or compelled to make recantation at the sword's point. On the 5th day of December, 1560, however, Francis II. expired at Orleans. After a period of brief suspense, the government was conferred upon Catherine de Medici, on the voluntary surrender by Antoine de Bourbon, king of Navarre, of his right to the regency during the minority of the young king Charles IX. Antoine, nevertheless, stipulated as the price of his acquiescence, his nomination to the post of lieutenant-general of the realm, with the privilege of opening first all despatches addressed to the government connected with the department of war. The queen also promised to consult him generally on state matters as a faithful and trusted colleague. The States of the realm then assembled at Orleans confirmed this disposition; only, they withheld from Catherine the title of regent, substituting that of governess and tutoress of the young king, hoping thereby to allay the animosity of the rival factions.[1]

Queen Catherine had now attained the object of her ambition; nevertheless, her position was precarious as possible, and fraught with anxiety. Her claim to supreme power rested alone on her title as the mother of the sovereign. Whilst Catherine wore the crown matrimonial of France, and during the brief reign of her son Francis II., her influence had been eclipsed by that possessed by madame de Valentinois and the Guises. The people were still ignorant of her political capacity; while the nobles of the court rendered homage only to the wonderful gifts of fascination; and to the powers of language with which the queen-mother was

[1] Mém. de Michel de Castelnau, liv. iii.—De Thou. La Place—Commentaires de l'Etat. La Planche—Hist. de l'Etat de France.

endowed. The queen at the commencement of her regency, therefore, beheld two rival claimants for power, each dissatisfied at his submission to her authority, —able, popular, and ready to avail himself of any oversight on her part to regain the advantage relinquished during the panic attending the inauguration of a new reign. The king of Navarre was the first prince of the blood, and the leader of the Calvinists, then a powerful body, comprehending men distinguished for their rank, learning, and abilities; who clung with zeal to the principles of reform—and advocated with unflinching eloquence the right of every individual to serve God according to his conscience, in loyal obedience to the civil power. The duc de Guise was the champion of the ancient faith, and the minister approved by the king of Spain and the papal court. The noble presence and princely liberality of the duke won the hearts of the multitude: the alliances of the house of Guise-Lorraine placed at his disposal the political influence of the chief aristocracy of the nation; while the clergy of the Gallican church regarded the princes of Lorraine as the bulwarks of the true faith—protectors whose piety and zeal repressed the dangerous encroachments of heresy.

Catherine, therefore, commenced her regency by fomenting the jealousy and hatred of factions. Compelled, by the necessity of at first propitiating her colleague Antoine de Bourbon, to show favour to the adherents of the "new doctrines," Catherine neutralized, as she hoped, this concession, by deploring in private to the duc de Guise and the constable de Montmorency the political emergency which rendered such countenance to heresy unavoidable. Appealed to as arbitress in the feuds which ensued, the queen beheld the gradual consolidation of her power. Nevertheless, skilled as was Catherine in diplomatic resource, she had

still to submit to many mortifying defeats brought about by the intrigues of Spain and Rome; but yet, again, the marvellous fortune and address of the queen seldom failed eventually to triumph.

The little duc d'Anjou,[1] the favourite son of Catherine, whom she intended "to initiate into her own policy and to train as her future support and comfort," remained at Amboise with his sister Marguerite and his brother the duc d'Alençon. Henry and his sister occupied at Amboise the same position over their juvenile court as Francis II. and Mary Stuart did at that of St. Germain. The establishment at Amboise, however, was deficient in much of the splendour which rendered that of St. Germain so renowned. Henry seems often to have acted with much petulance and pride when called upon to interfere in the boyish feuds of his companions. Amongst these were the marquis de Beaupréau, son of the prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, and the prince de Joinville, son of the duc de Guise. Already was antagonism developed in these early days between Henri de Guise and the duc d'Anjou—an enmity which terminated in the perdition of both, and the ruin of the race of Valois.

The prince de Joinville[2] was often Henry's successful competitor in the games of the youthful cavaliers of Amboise. He could ride, vault, dance, and pay courtly *devoirs* to the young beauties attendant on the princess, as well and often more successfully than his royal master. Above all he pleased the princess Marguerite, and presumed to entitle himself "her cavalier;" an appellation which caused Monsieur, as Henry now was called, excessive umbrage. Marguerite, however, herself

[1] On the decease of Francis II. the duc d'Anjou exchanged his title for that of duc d'Orléans. Some years subsequently he received as an appanage the duchy of Anjou, when he reverted to his first appellation.

[2] Henri de Lorraine, son of François duc de Guise and of Anne d'Este, born at Joinville, 1550.

at one time had forbidden the prince to take this title. One day when the princess, then in her seventh year, was sitting on the knee of her royal father Henry II., the marquis de Beaupréau and the young prince de Joinville were playing together in the same apartment. The king asked his daughter which of the two cavaliers she would choose for her knight? Marguerite, after watching the two attentively for some minutes, demurely replied, "Mon père, le marquis de Beaupréau." The king asked the princess why, as the prince de Joinville was much the handsomest cavalier of the two. "The marquis," replied Marguerite, "is wiser and better than the prince de Joinville, who never can be easy unless he is doing mischief, and who always insists upon being our master and ruler!"[1]

At the commencement of Catherine's regency the duc d'Anjou had accomplished his tenth year and Marguerite was nine years old. Though a child in years, the princess showed an early appreciation of the power of her attractions. Her education was advanced and she spoke several languages with ease and fluency. The portraits taken at this early age represent her as having a complexion of brilliant hue. Her eyes are blue, open, and piercing; her hair, which was black and luxuriant, is hidden under a *coiffure* of blonde tresses; her mouth and chin are exquisitely moulded; the lips round, firm, and of the most vivid red. Marguerite, in short, at the age of ten years, was a most captivating little damsel, and was herself perfectly well aware of her charms. The royal children visited the court at St. Germain during the autumn of 1561, to be present with the rest of the royal family at the celebrated conferences between the Roman Catholic and Protestant divines at Poissy. The duc d'Anjou,

[1] Mémoires de Marguerite de Valois, Reine de France et de Navarre, liv. i.

a precocious and forward boy, was persuaded by some personages of his household to feign a *penchant* for the doctrines of Calvin; for it cannot be supposed, as it has been asserted by some, that a child of Henry's age could comprehend or decide upon the merits of the controversy then agitating Europe; or accept any tenets from mental conviction of their truth. Henry therefore commenced a series of boyish persecutions, to compel his sister Marguerite to become "a Calvinist" also. Marguerite, however, sturdily declined to change her faith; or to sing the psalms according to Marot's version. Henry, unable to bear the slightest contradiction, therefore, in a fit of fury one day seized his sister's 'Hours,' her missal, and her rosary, and threw them into the fire, saying "that she was stupid and obstinate, for that no one, after hearing the pure words of charity preached, as they had done, would continue a bigot; but that he plainly perceived that Marguerite intended to become as great a fool as her governess." Marguerite wept, but stanchly replied, "Monsieur, you may kill me if such is your pleasure; but I will suffer every ill rather than lose my soul!" Marguerite relates that her governess took her soon afterwards to visit the cardinal de Tournon, who commended her zeal, and replaced the books and the rosary destroyed by Monsieur. The story at length reached the ears of queen Catherine, who summoned the young prince to her presence; and after reprimanding him severely for his unkind conduct towards his sister, and on the folly of his own recent professions in religious matters, she took from the pocket of his coat a book of prayers used at the *prêches* of the Huguenots, and Marot's version of the psalms. The queen then very seriously admonished her son on his levity; and proceeded to demonstrate her displeasure by the dismissal of his preceptor and sub-preceptor for not having defended the inexperience of their pupil from

the misrepresentations of those who rejoiced to sow dissension between members of the royal family.[1] The conduct of the queen herself, nevertheless, could not at this period be cited as a model of consistency. One day, to please Guise and Montmorency, Catherine appeared with her sons at mass, behaving with edifying devotion; the next, to conciliate the king of Navarre and the princes of Châtillon, the queen attended the sermons of Montluc, bishop of Valence; or even the private expositions of the Calvinist faith given by Théodore de Bèze in the apartments of Condé, or in the salon of Jeanne d'Albret. At the close of the conferences the duc d'Anjou and his sister Marguerite returned to Amboise, where they remained throughout the period of the first civil war, which commenced in 1562 and terminated at the peace of Orleans, after the assassination of the duc de Guise in 1563. Henry and his sister Marguerite had now become inseparable companions. The sympathy, however, between the royal brother and sister differed from that refined interchange of sentiment which united Francis I. and his gifted sister Marguerite d'Angoulême, while they also in their youth inhabited the castle of Amboise, and wandered amid its shady gardens; or gazed from its ramparts on the swift waters of the Loire. Henry and Marguerite de Valois cared little for literature, or for the society of learned men. They delighted in festive merriment; in the pomp and revel of a court; or in the pastimes of the chase, riding, and hawking. Often Marguerite accompanied her brother to shoot with the crossbow, an accomplishment in which, like her mother, she excelled; and for long a tradition lingered amid the valleys and hills of beautiful Touraine of the handsome and manly figure of Henri d'Anjou; and of the bright eyes and loveliness of his sister Marguerite, as side by

[1] Mém. de Marguerite de Valois, liv. i.

side they rode forth from Amboise, followed by a troop of gallant cavaliers and ladies.

The character of the duc d'Anjou, meantime, had been gradually forming; though it was not until after he had mingled in the broils of the court that its subtle intricacies became fully developed. His accomplishments were now numerous. He could dance, vault, wrestle, compose a sonnet, and touch the lyre so as to admit of no superiority from cavaliers of his own years. His temper was imperious, though condescending. He was courteous in his manners, and fastidious to excess in his habits. His figure, when in the full vigour of manhood, was finely proportioned and majestic. In the regularity of his features he resembled his mother; while, like the queen, he also possessed that command of expression which enabled him when conversing with others to conceal his own impressions. But even while Henry resided at Amboise the cavaliers his companions placed no faith in his sincerity; for the bland smile which constantly rested on his features and the studied refinement of his language inspired distrust. Henry early showed great love for martial display; and it was only while receiving lessons in military tactics that he displayed either interest or aptitude for study. Catherine, in the unremitting correspondence which she maintained with her son, enjoined the most earnest application to this branch of his education. The duke's courage was seldom daunted: he possessed strong tenacity of disposition; but, like Catherine, he generally preferred to attain his desires by slow and cautious approach rather than by a *coup de main*—which, as Henry, already an adept in worldly maxims, averred, usually entailed failure. The duke was generous, profuse, splendid in his attire, but profligate. He loved society; his demeanour was chivalrous, and his popularity with the ladies of the court unbounded. In religion the duc d'Anjou was devout

and zealous. The outrages alleged to have been committed by Condé and his soldiery had roused in the bosom of the prince the most intense hatred towards his brother's subjects of the reformed faith. His boyish leaning towards the tenets of Calvin, therefore, vanished, never more to be rekindled. Henry, like his grandfather Francis I., loved the pomp and ceremonial of the Romish Church. The services and ritual, moreover, suited the indolent and sensuous tone of his mind. Of a temperament highly excitable and impulsive, Henry ever unscrupulously yielded to the passions of the moment, and afterwards sought solace and relief in the rigid penances prescribed by the Church.

Such was the character of the duc d'Anjou when, in 1563, queen Catherine summoned him and the princess Marguerite to accompany her in the journey throughout the kingdom which she had projected with the young king, Charles IX. The first civil conflict had terminated, leaving Catherine arbitress of France. One by one the queen had seen her rivals vanish. Antoine de Bourbon fell wounded by a bullet before the town of Rouen; the duc de Guise died by the hand of an assassin before Orleans. The fate of the battle of Dreux had delivered Condé a prisoner at the queen's disposal. The constable Anne de Montmorency, who had so valiantly served his country, oppressed now by the weight of years, presumed no longer to oppose the projects of his royal mistress; or to present so firm a protest against Catherine's insincere overtures to conciliate sometimes the Huguenots, at others the orthodox party in the realm. The cardinal de Lorraine, once so formidable, daunted by his isolated position and by the loss of his heroic brother, offered to the queen most humble submission; and professed himself ready to serve his majesty at St. Germain or in Rome, as should be deemed most con-

ducive to the welfare of the throne. The maréchal de St. André, formerly the queen's unrelenting opponent, had almost retired from court, ruined in health by the past profligacy of his life; and impoverished by the lavish extravagance of his wife.

The court of Spain, baffled in its projects by the death of Guise and the minority of his son, and embarrassed by the precarious condition of affairs in the Low Countries, professed the most pacific intents towards the queen-regent. The chief leaders of faction, and opponents of Catherine's authority, therefore, were the princes of Châtillon—the amiral de Coligny, and his brothers; between whom and the members of the house of Guise a deadly feud existed. The Guises accused the admiral of having connived at, if not of actually compassing the assassination of the duc de Guise; a charge made on no slight evidence, and from which Coligny has by no means vindicated himself. The nobles of the court arrayed themselves in the ranks of the partisans of one of the great rival houses of Guise and Montmorency: for the interests of the princes of Châtillon were identified with those of their uncle the constable. The princes of the blood allied to the Montmorency, acknowledging the military genius of Coligny, and that powerful intellect which rendered him the worthy colleague of Condé, espoused the defence of the admiral. Catherine skilfully profited by these divisions. The constable and his nephews she held in check by her threats that the prayers of the princes of Lorraine should be granted, and a commission appointed to investigate the murder of the duc de Guise: the princes of Guise she coerced by their fear of losing the favour of the court, and of being ejected from share in public affairs during the minority of the young duc de Guise. The princes of Bourbon Catherine pacified by an article of the treaty of Orleans;

by which she had promised to appoint Condé lieutenant-general of the realm—an engagement which she never purported to fulfil,

The journey through the realm, projected by Catherine de Medici in 1563, had a threefold object. The queen wished to dismiss the courtiers until time and absence had somewhat allayed the animosities of party; while she hoped to conciliate public sympathy by the sight of the youthful king and his brothers. Secondly, the queen desired to discuss with the queen of Spain, her daughter, and the ministers of Philip II., a plan for the banishment from the realm of persons holding heterodox opinions; in short, to resume, with the aid and connivance of the Spanish court, though in modified extent, the plan of proscription frustrated by the premature decease of Francis II. at Orleans, in 1560.[1] Thirdly, Catherine believed that the absence of the sovereign, and the removal of the court from Paris, would weaken, if not destroy, the influence of those houses whose sway over the household had almost become arbitrary. Besides, she wished to elevate a fresh class of courtiers, whose influence it was the queen's intent hereafter to oppose to the traditional claims of the ancient nobles of the realm—men who, owing their rule to her favour, should show themselves her devoted adherents; and through whose representations she might the more easily retain her influence over the minds of her sons. With this view the queen, before her departure from Paris, placed about the person of the king and the duc d'Anjou, the comte de Retz,[2] and the barons d'Acier, de Villequier, de Lansac, de

[1] See Life of Elizabeth de Valois, vol. ii. p. 28.

[2] Albert de Gondy, one of queen Catherine's Italian *protégés*. Gondy married Claude Catherine de Clermont, dame de Retz, widow of the maréchal d'Annebaut. The comtesse de Retz was the most witty and learned lady of the court.—Officiers de la Chambre de Monsieur, Bibl. Imp. Béth. 8779 MSS.

Lignerolles, and others. The fortunes and the advancement of these young nobles being entirely dependent on Catherine's favour, they were careful on all occasions to offer advice to the king and his brothers in accordance with her desires.

Catherine received her son d'Anjou with great honour, and beheld with approbation the many gifts which promised hereafter eminently to qualify him for the political career her maternal affection had traced. Her daughter Marguerite she greeted also with a warm welcome.

The queen had already commenced to negotiate the future union of the princess with don Carlos, son of Philip II., or with the young king of Portugal, Sebastian I. During the remaining portion of the year 1563, and part of the following year, the queen, with her children, continued her progress throughout the realm. In the month of June, 1564, the interview of Bayonne was holden between Elizabeth, queen of Spain, and her mother. The duc d'Anjou, at the head of a gallant troop of cavaliers, met his sister at Hernani, in the province of Guipuscoa, and escorted her to Bayonne; but on account of his youth he took no prominent share in the political conferences which there ensued.

On the return of the queen from this expedition, the assembly of Moulins was holden, for the ostensible purpose of reconciling the hostile nobles of the realm. By the express command of Catherine, the amiral de Coligny and the young duc de Guise promised to forget ancient feuds, and to live hereafter as loyal subjects of the crown. A reconciliation was also effected between the cardinal de Lorraine and the maréchal de Montmorency, governor of Paris;[1] who were at deadly

[1] François de Montmorency, born July, 1530, at Chantilly, eldest son of the constable Anne de Montmorency, and of Madeleine de Savoye.

enmity on account of a skirmish which ensued in the streets of the capital, when the cardinal, on his return from Trent, insisted on passing through Paris at the head of an armed train, in defiance of the recent edicts of pacification.

The claims of the prince de Condé meantime continued to be disregarded by Catherine; and the article of the treaty of Orleans which conferred upon him the dignity of lieutenant-general of the realm seemed totally forgotten by the queen. This high command, however, was in fact the office which Catherine destined for her son d'Anjou.

Already the uncertain humour of the young king inspired Catherine with disquiet. If her son Henry, therefore, were invested with supreme command over the armies of France, he might afford her hereafter efficient support; and aid her in retaining her influence, despite the machinations of any rivals whom it might please the king to elevate. Influenced, therefore, by his royal mother, the conduct of the duc d'Anjou towards the prince de Condé became overbearing and presumptuous: he even dared, in the presence of the court, to threaten the prince with his undying enmity did he presume to aspire to a command which rightfully belonged to himself as brother of the king.[1] Condé made complaint to the queen of this boyish insolence. Catherine laughed; but neither reprimanded her son nor denied his pretensions. The prince, therefore, unwilling to provoke the hostility of the

[1] "Nous vimes bien," says Brantôme, "que M. le duc luy parloit de hautes paroles; ores tenant son epée sur le pommeau fort haute; ores faisant semblant de taster à sa dague; ores enfonçant, ou haussant son bonnet; bref, nous connûmes en luy une contenance fort bravache et altière. Nous vismes bien aussi M. le prince toujours découvert et parler doux à son geste."—Vie de M. le Prince de Condé.

young duke, retired from court, not being able to endure, as he himself stated, "the arrogant deportment of a beardless youth, though the brother of his king."

The departure of Condé from Paris confirmed the sinister apprehensions of Coligny and his party. The conferences of Bayonne, and the subsequent secret levy by Catherine of a body of six thousand Swiss troops, irritated the princes, and totally destroyed their faith in the pacific protestations of the court. Catherine, moreover, had recently despatched an envoy to hold conference with the duke of Alba at Brussels, on the condition of religious affairs. The edicts of pacification were ostensibly maintained: but any infraction, it was observed, of the privileges therein conceded was passed over by the government, while the parties aggrieved were left with their wrongs unredressed. The agitation and mutual suspicion at length became so intense, that it resulted in the enterprise of Meaux: a conspiracy planned by Condé and Coligny to carry off the young king while sojourning at the queen's palace of Monceaux, in Champagne. The object of the enterprise was the exile of the cardinal de Lorraine and the princes of Guise, and the elevation of Condé to the post of lieutenant-general of the realm, as stipulated by the treaty of Orleans, with the general superintendence of affairs of state. This expedition, which was executed on the 29th of September, 1567, failed. The king, with his brothers, the ducs d'Anjou and d'Alençon, and the queen-mother, hastily retreated to Paris, where they were followed by Condé and Coligny, who encamped at St. Denis. On the 10th of November following, a battle ensued, in which the constable de Montmorency was killed;[1] and this event, disastrous as it was to the country, afforded the opening that Catherine desired for the appointment of the duc

[1] Mém. de Castelnau. De Thou. Brantôme. Dupleix.

d'Anjou as lieutenant general of the realm and chief of the armies of France. No sooner, therefore, were the funeral solemnities of the deceased constable over, than Catherine caused a declaration to be issued by the king, suppressing that ancient and influential office, and investing his brother Henry with supreme power over the armies of the realm as lieutenant-general.[1] The young duke had completed his sixteenth year when elevated to this important office, which in the distracted condition of the country required the knowledge and experience of a soldier able as well as valiant. The duke's first essay in arms was immediately made in pursuit of the retreating army of Condé. After the conflict of St. Denis, the prince retired in battle array upon Montereau, on his march to form a junction with John Casimir, son of the elector palatine, who was advancing at the head of a body of six thousand men to the aid of the Calvinists of France. It was also the first campaign of the young duc de Guise, whose earliest exploit was the relief of the town of Sens. The brave maréchal de Tavannes[2] commanded under the duc d'Anjou; but, notwithstanding the superior advantages possessed by the royal forces, Condé proceeded from Montereau to Châlons-sur-Saône, where he was joined by the German levies. The prince thus reinforced, marched and laid siege to Chartres. The duc d'Anjou and de Tavannes advanced to relieve the garrison; but such were the overwhelming difficulties of the government, that Catherine hastily concluded a peace with Condé and the admiral, which was signed on the 2nd of March, 1568, the campaign having lasted little more than three months. The peace of Chartres

[1] Castelnau, De Thou. Mém. de Vielleville.

[2] Gaspard de Saulx, maréchal de Tavannes, governor and admiral of Provence. The maréchal de Tavannes married Françoise de la Baume, niece of the cardinal de Tournon. De Tavannes died in 1573.

or of Longjumeaux restored to the Protestants of France the privileges conferred on them by the edict of Orleans. The king undertook to dismiss on his own responsibility the German reiters; and to satisfy all pecuniary demands incurred by Condé—the prince on his side engaging to restore to the crown all places captured by his arms.[1]

The peace so hastily granted, which was extorted from the government by financial difficulties, was of brief duration. Just five months after the signature of the peace of Chartres, Condé was a fugitive, flying with his family for refuge to the town of La Rochelle to escape arrest; the queen and the cardinal de Lorraine having planned a similar enterprise against the Huguenot leaders as that undertaken by them to effect the capture of the king at Monceaux. A third civil contest, therefore, convulsed the country. The amiral de Coligny and Condé established their head-quarters with the queen of Navarre and her son at La Rochelle; and soon their arms subjugated nearly the whole of the south-western provinces of the realm.

The duc d'Anjou, as lieutenant-general, had the nominal command of the royal army sent against the Huguenots. His lieutenants were the marshals Biron and Gaspard de Tavannes; and to them alone is the entire glory of the successful campaign due. The young duke acted implicitly by their counsels, as he had been directed to do by his royal mother. The incidents, therefore, of this campaign can scarcely be considered as appertaining to the biography of Henri d'Anjou; though the fame arising from the victories of Jarnac, where Condé fell, and that of Moncontour, in which Coligny received a severe wound, was appropriated by the duke.

The victory of Jarnac, and the valiant deportment

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps.

of the duc d'Anjou were, therefore, celebrated in all manner of verse. Henry was compared to Scipio, to Cæsar, and to other famed heroes of antiquity. His prowess, orthodoxy, valour, and beauty of person formed the burden of countless sonnets, composed and presented to Catherine. The queen received these tributes with smiles, and with exultation. The young king uttered, indeed, a few words of commendation on his brother's assumed deeds; but always added thereto a dry query as to whether the true heroes of the day were not, after all, his faithful subjects Tavannes and de Biron?

A *Te Deum* was chanted in thanksgiving for the victory of Jarnac, at which Charles was present; and the standards captured from the Huguenots were sent to Rome as a present to the pope.[1]

The duc d'Anjou, however, soon became weary of the monotony of the camp; while the rude discipline of the life he there led was little congenial with his luxurious habits. Accordingly, after the conflict at Jarnac, he sent a gentleman to the queen, the bearer of a message to the effect "that he had reduced the Huguenots to such straits, so that in a few days there must be another battle: he therefore earnestly prayed their majesties that he might first have the felicity of seeing them; for fear lest fortune, envious of the glory which he had already acquired in the service of the king and of his faith, might unite his own obsequies with the triumph of another victory—the which he should not regret, he having previously had the good fortune of embracing them both."[2] Catherine was much affected by this appeal from her favourite son. Henry had, moreover, in the household of the queen, a fervent advocate in her beautiful maid-of-honour Renée de Châ-

[1] Journal de Brûlart, année 1568.

[2] Mém. de Marguerite de Valois, liv. i.

teauneuf, who had been the object of the duke's gallant homage from the time he quitted Amboise. Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, therefore, entreated her royal mistress to heed the solicitations of a prince whose heroic deeds were the glory of France. The princess Marguerite, likewise, earnestly prayed her mother to grant the interview so pathetically demanded by her brother. The alliance between Henry and Marguerite, however, had cooled since their departure from Amboise. Marguerite, whose beauty daily became more fascinating, was beset by adulation. The most accomplished coquette of the court, Marguerite's wit and vivacity dazzled; while the generosity of her character, her condescension, and kind heart, rendered her beloved by those who were too sage to be captivated by the power of her charms. No cavalier of the court was more favoured by Marguerite than the young duc de Guise; and the preference which had been evinced by the princess from the period of the interview of the courts of France and Spain, at Bayonne, was the principal cause of the alienation subsisting between Henry and his sister. Marguerite's solicitude, therefore, that her mother should grant the duke the meeting he requested, was partly prompted by her desire to see the duc de Guise, who would present himself amongst the cavaliers in Henry's train. Thus warmly adjured, Catherine resolved to greet her son; but, sensible of the inconvenience which might accrue to the king's cause, by the departure of the duke from the army, and the distance of the capital from the seat of war, she determined to meet him in Touraine, at the castle of Plessis-les-Tours.

Accordingly the court, in obedience to the queen's mandate, departed from Paris in precipitate haste; and accomplished the journey to Plessis in little more than three days. "The queen my mother," writes Mar-

guerite, in her humorous description of the hurried transit of the court, "being transported on the wings of affectionate love and maternal desire, made the journey from Paris to Tours in three days and a half; which was not accomplished without much inconvenience and many laughable incidents, especially to poor M. le cardinal de Bourbon, who never quitted the queen, and who was not of a humour or constitution fitted to bear such troublesome adventures. At Plessis-les-Tours," continues the princess, "we met my brother d'Anjou and the principal chieftains of his army, who were the flower of our French chivalry." Many bitter sarcasms did this hurried journey of the court bring from the lips of king Charles, then in his nineteenth year. His reception of his brother was cold; and he listened with an air of supercilious disdain to the eulogiums which the courtiers lavished on Henry. The day following the arrival of the court at Plessis, the duc d'Anjou pronounced a harangue in the presence of the king, recounting his own exploits and the progress of the campaign. Catherine made a brief reply; and then paid her son the compliment of retiring to deliberate with the council on the various propositions of the duke's discourse; and on his suggestions relative to the future prosecution of the war. The king, however, carelessly observed, "that the war having hitherto been made with signal success, it was best to leave its conduct in the hands of those who had proved themselves able captains," alluding to Biron and Tavannes, to whom Charles justly awarded the laurels of the campaign. The evident alienation manifested by Charles, and his jealous disregard of his brother's military exploits, occasioned Henry intense annoyance. It was in vain that Catherine offered every assurance and pledge to sooth the duke's disquietude; he feared lest his mother might soon no longer be able to sway at plea-

sure the council of the king; while he dreaded the rivalry of the duc de Guise, who seemed in paramount favour, both with Charles and his sister Marguerite. By the advice of Villequier,[1] and others of his confidential friends, the duc d'Anjou before his departure sought to win his sister Marguerite to espouse his interests; for daily the reserve of the king increased, and, as it seemed, in measure as tidings of his brother's military renown reached Plessis.

One day, therefore, Catherine, the princess Marguerite, and the court went to take pastime in the park of Plessis. Henry, marking his opportunity, drew his sister apart, and thus addressed her: "My sister, you will, I know, agree with me in believing that our youth passed together, and our education, is a tie binding upon us to love each other even more than we are led to do by our proximity of kin. You have, therefore, doubtless observed that I have always shown more preference towards you than for any of my other brothers and sisters; I on my part acknowledge to have received the same tokens of love from yourself. We have until now been actuated in thus doing by no other motive than that springing from the pleasure which we mutually feel in each other's society. This motive, therefore, has been sufficient so long as we remained children; now, however, it is no longer expedient to act childishly. You are aware of the noble and important offices which it has pleased God to give me; and to which the queen, our good mother, has elevated me. You must also believe, yourself being the person whom I love and cherish most, that I shall never have any dignities in which you will not share. I recognise in you a wit and a judgment capable of maintaining me in the good opinion of the queen my mother; for, *ma sœur*, I am convinced that my only stay in this realm is in her

[1] Georges le Voyer, seigneur de la Guierche.

favour. I fear, therefore, that absence may injure me in her esteem; as, in consequence of the war, the office which I hold will compel me to be almost always at a distance from this court; while, on the contrary, the king my brother, being always with her, flattering and pleasing her, I dread lest this may be prejudicial to my prospects; for be assured, that when the king grows to manhood, being courageous as he is, he will cease to amuse himself alone with hunting; but being ambitious also of fame, he will leave the pursuit of beasts for that of men, and will deprive me of the office of lieutenant-general, himself to take the command of his armies. *Ma sœur!* this disgrace would overwhelm me in such fashion, that I would rather die by the most cruel death than submit to it. Thus, having considered the means in my power to escape this dire disgrace, I have arrived at the conclusion that it is necessary for me to have some one near the queen my mother well affected towards my person and interests. I know no one so proper as yourself: you possess wit, judgment, and fidelity, provided that you oblige me by adding thereto devotion and submission towards the queen (in such way as to be invariably present at her *lever* and *coucher*, and often to present yourself in her private cabinet) which will induce her to confide in you. I will, on my part, speak to her majesty of your excellent capacity, and request her no longer to treat you as a child, but to mention to you all matters which she would confide to me. Speak to her, therefore, in future, in all assurance; for it will be great prosperity to be beloved by the queen our mother. You will accomplish great things for yourself and for me; and I, for my part, will ever hold you, next to God, as the upholder of my good fortune and future distinction." Marguerite, in her memoirs, recounts her surprise at hearing herself thus addressed by the hero of Jarnac, whose ex-

ploits everybody, excepting the king, united in lauding. "Neither," adds the princess, with affected modesty, "had I lived hitherto having any such purposes in view; my only thoughts then being to dance and to go to hunt; for I had no ambition at that period to adorn myself by dress, or even to look handsome. I had not attained a suitable age for similar designs; and, moreover, I had been taught to live in such awe of the queen my mother, that not only dared I not speak to her, but when she looked at me it made me shiver with affright lest I had done something to displease her." Marguerite, nevertheless, gave her brother the promise he required; and plighted her word to serve him in every possible way at court—and also to keep him well-informed of any intrigue to injure him in the opinion of the king.

It is doubtful, however, whether Marguerite was sincere in her professions of friendship towards her brother even at this early period. Henry and his partisans afterwards affirmed that the princess went straight and repeated to the duc de Guise what he had imparted; and that the latter then and subsequently made use of information so derived to the injury of the duc d'Anjou.

The duke, during his sojourn of five days at Plessis, accordingly recommended his sister to the queen's especial notice as a personage eminently trusted by himself. The queen, after the departure of her son, therefore, called Marguerite into her private cabinet, and said: "Your brother has rendered me account of the conversation you held together before his departure; also, that he deems you no longer a child. I will therefore treat you as one no longer. It will be a great pleasure to me to speak to you as to your brother. Render yourself, therefore, assiduous in your attendance upon me, and fear not to speak freely, for such is my desire,"

The young princess from thenceforth was admitted to many conferences with Catherine concerning her brother Henry. This privilege, however, proved of very evil issue for Marguerite; for, as she still continued to evince the same admiration for the duc de Guise; Henry believed that in her correspondence with the former she constantly betrayed his confidence. The princess thus gradually lost her brother's confidence; while the interest which she demonstrated for Henry alienated the regard of the king. This confidence between Henry and Marguerite in the park of Plessis laid the foundation for many bitter animosities and subsequent calamities.

The campaign, meantime, made progress favourable to the cause of king Charles. The duc d'Anjou, or rather his lieutenant de Tavannes, despatched the duc de Guise to the relief of Lusignan; but suspecting that Poitiers was about to be attacked by the army of the princes, the duke, deviating from the commands given him, entered that town. Soon Coligny advanced, and laid siege to the city, as Guise had foreseen. The defence was bravely conducted, and the duke covered himself with glory by his exploits during the *sorties* by which he harassed the enemy, "The young duc de Guise," says the historian Mezerai,[1] "acquired by his most courageous defence of Poitiers a glory no less brilliant than that gained by his father in Metz while besieged by the armies of the emperor Charles V." The amiral de Coligny was compelled to retreat, after a siege of more than six weeks to succour Châtellerault, which was menaced by the duc d'Anjou and Tavannes. On the 3rd day of October, 1569, the battle of Moncontour was fought, which ended in the sanguinary defeat of Coligny and the retreat of the army of the princes to

[1] Vie de Charles IX. Portrait de Charles IX.—Bibl. Imp. MS. Fontanieu, 331-32-33.

Parthency. Henry demeaned himself heroically during the combat. He was unhorsed several times, and exposed to imminent peril. The example of the duc de Guise excited the duke to unparalleled exertions: riding side by side with Tavannes, his courageous bearing elicited the admiration of the Huguenot chivalry. Henry on this occasion honourably distinguished himself for his humanity during the horrid massacre which ensued on the termination of the engagement after the retreat of Coligny, whose jaw had been shattered during the fight. Followed only by his aides-de-camp, Henry presented himself in every part of the field, allaying, by promises and remonstrances, the ferocity of the soldiery; and even using his sword when requisite in defence of some helpless victims.[1]

The news of this victory was received in ominous silence by King Charles; by Catherine it was hailed with ill-dissembled joy. Charles imperiously demanded from his mother why his brother d'Anjou should reap all the glory of the war, while he, the king, remained leading a life idle and inglorious? He, moreover, told the queen "that it was not his pleasure to enact the rôle of one of the 'rois fainéants,' and suffer his brother to usurp the power of maire du palais, but that he would lead his own armies, like Francis I. his grandfather, into the field!" By the express order of Charles, whose mood had become so fierce that Catherine thought it more prudent not to oppose him in any design, the siege of St. Jean d'Angely was commenced; when the king departed to superintend the military operations in person. The advice of Biron and Tavannes was completely disregarded by the king; whose object it now seemed to be to defeat the pretensions and to neutralize the fame acquired by his brother,

[1] Mém. de Michel de Castlenau. La Poplinière. De Thou: Davila.

rather than to annihilate the remains of the Huguenot army. Tavannes addressed a memorial to Catherine, praying her majesty to command that the war might be carried on with vigour; and that pursuit might be made after the army of the princes—rather than that the strength of the royal forces should be broken by the despatch of divisions to besiege towns garrisoned by the Huguenots. "These will fall of themselves, madame, when the centre from whence they derive strength and supplies has been destroyed by you."[1] Charles, however, was not to be deterred from undertaking the siege of St. Jean; but though the place eventually capitulated, its conquest proved more disastrous to the Catholic cause than the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour and the siege of Poitiers to that of the Huguenots.

The character of the king proved a source of solicitude to Cathèrine de Medici, and permitted her throughout his reign scarce an interval of tranquillity. The measured cadence of her voice, however, and the steadiness of her gaze, exercised over Charles, when in his most violent moods, the same species of fascination as that which impels the fluttering bird into the jaws of the serpent. In his temper Charles was uncertain—at times his fury amounted to insanity. His faculties then became bewildered, so that friend or foe fell before the frenzy which impelled him to destroy every person or thing with which his will came into collision. In his ordinary moods the king was affable, liberal, and indulgent. His popularity was great among the poorer classes of his subjects, who relished Charles's rough goodnature and the homeliness of his speech. The king possessed a profound appreciation of his responsibility as a sovereign; with equal force did he bitterly feel, on the other hand, his own deficiencies of educa-

[1] Avis du Maréchal de Tavannes: Mémoires.

tion, and his slender knowledge of the science of government,—an ignorance so deeply resented, that he had at all times a reproach ready wherewith to taunt his mother for the little solicitude she had displayed on this point. He was indefatigable in the daily discharge of the routine of government. A few months after his accession, when Charles had just completed his eighth year, the condition of the realm rendering it desirable that the coronation might not be delayed, one of the members of the council of state proposed that the ceremony should be performed. The queen objected, on the plea that her son was too young to endure the fatigue of the ceremonial. The king sat for some minutes silently listening to the discussion: he then rose, and approaching his mother, said, "Madame, I shall bear these fatigues well, fear not. Moreover, I will support them cheerfully every time that there are more crowns and kingdoms offered for my acceptance."[1] Probably there never was a life more embittered by mental misery than that of Charles IX. His admiration of excellence was intense; while his own personal demonstration of that which he highly appreciated in others was ever frustrated by infirmity of character. He wished to reign beneficently, but on all sides obstacles arose;—the Huguenot faction was represented to him as one accursed in faith and treasonable in aim; the Catholic party as seeking to hold him in tutelage in order to elevate the house of Lorraine-Guise, or his brother the duc d'Anjou. His mother, Charles suspected of coveting his throne for her favourite son d'Anjou; while he resented her neglect of his education; which, as he truly averred, was on many subjects less advanced than that of one of his *valets-de-chambre.*

[1] Histoire de Charles IX. par Papyrius Masson. The coronation day of Charles IX. was fixed by the astrologer Gabrielli Simeoni, whom Catherine de Medici consulted on the subject.

In stature Charles was tall, his shoulders were high, and he had a slight habitual stoop. His features were well formed and intelligent, though pallid. His eyes were sharp and penetrating, deeply set, and shadowed by heavy brows. Few could support the king's gaze: towards those personages whom he disliked, the mingled irony and menace of his glance was intolerable; and no person at court appreciated this power more thoroughly than did the duc d'Anjou. In the court circle the satirical eye of the king was seldom averted from his brother; as, arrayed in perfumed vestments and displaying the gallant courtesies of the most fastidious *petit-maître*, Henry paid his *devoirs* to the fair damsels of the famed *escadron de la reyne-mère*. No one excelled the king in sarcastic point of speech; Charles in a few words, or by the utterance of a biting jest, would put the most accomplished flatterer to confusion. Yet, despite these asperities, there were fountains of tender feeling in the character of Charles IX.—seldom, it is true, manifested, but nevertheless existing. His regard for Marie Touchet,[1] the only being who, he averred, cared for him, is proof of a better nature. Charles, who was so redoubtable to his courtiers; and whose most amiable condescensions were usually evinced by a jeer at some besetting foible, became courteous and tolerant while conversing with *sa belle Marie*, and when caressing the son she had already borne him.

The arrival of the king at St. Jean d'Angely therefore was exceedingly dreaded by Henry; who, while his

[1] Marie Touchet was the daughter of an apothecary of Orleans. She bore king Charles two sons—the eldest died in his infancy; the second, Charles de Valois, lived to become grand prior of France, duc d'Angoulême, and to espouse a Montmorency. Marie Touchet, after the decease of king Charles, married François de Balsac d'Antragues, in 1578, and became the mother, besides other children, of Henriette marquise de Verneuil, mistress of Henry IV. The comtesse d'Antragues died in 1587, of fright, during a popular commotion in Orleans.

brother remained in camp, no longer exercised the prerogatives of lieutenant-general. The duke had recently taken into favour Louis de Béranger, baron du Guast, a young cavalier of illustrious descent, but who at this period sought to maintain his influence by embroiling his royal master with his former friends; and especially by nourishing Henry's umbrage at the exploits of the duc de Guise. Henry had imbibed the opinion that the king's visit to the camp was to be attributed to the counsels of Guise; and this conviction had given rise to the suspicion that the princess Marguerite still maintained intimate relations with the latter, and had betrayed his confidence. The evident good understanding which existed between Guise; and his sister—for Marguerite had accompanied her mother and the king to St. Jean —transported the duke with indignation. Already his rival in arms, Henry beheld his influence over his sister superseded by Guise. In her memoirs Marguerite denies this *liaison* with the duc de Guise, who she declares was at this time making ardent suit to the princesse de Porcien, a lady whom he afterwards espoused. All contemporary writers nevertheless allege that the attachment between the duc de Guise and the princess was notorious; and that Marguerite at the age of eighteen should have lost her heart to the handsomest and most illustrious cavalier of her brother's court is not surprising. The grandson of Louis XII., the duc de Guise believed himself to be guilty of no presumption in his suit to Marguerite; when, in addition to princely birth and enormous revenue, he could add the *prestige* of his father's achievements and his own gallant exploits for the defence of her brother's crown. Henry, however, conceived the most unjust resentment against his sister for daring to cherish a preference which he had not previously sanctioned; and most of all, for presuming to distinguish the prince whom, in Henry's mind, a secret

presentiment ever designated as his future rival in popularity, and his most determined foe. Indifferent, however, to her brother's displeasure, Marguerite, it is asserted, put forth her most bewitching attractions to fascinate the duke, and to hold him captive in her toils. Despite the haughty bearing of Monsieur, the duke was her partner at the balls by which Catherine sought to diversify the monotony of their camp life; and it was the duc de Guise who most frequently obtained the command of the escort sent to protect the sister of the king from the foraging parties of the enemy, when Marguerite desired to breathe a purer air than the pestilential atmosphere of the camp. The forbearance of Monsieur, however, did not last long. One day Catherine, while discoursing with her son, highly lauded the capacity of the princess; and congratulated the duke on having won so firm an ally. Henry dryly replied, "That he was glad her majesty had derived satisfaction from his sister's society, especially as it had been recommended by himself: nevertheless, recourse to the same means was not prudent at all times; and that an expedient highly salutary once, might be very prejudicial under other circumstances." Catherine asked her son what he meant by his speech, as she found herself totally unable to comprehend it. "Madame," rejoined Henry, tartly, "do you not perceive how beautiful my sister is, and that M. de Guise pays her ardent suit; and, moreover, that his uncles have nothing more at heart than that he may espouse her? Should my sister return this affection towards M. de Guise, it would be greatly to be feared that she will betray all my counsels to him. Madame, the ambition of that house (of Lorraine) must be well known to you, and how pertinaciously it has traversed all our own designs. It will be well, therefore, madame, not to confide longer any affairs to my sister; but gradually, if your majesty so wills, I purpose to withdraw from so

great familiarity with her."[1] The same evening, when the princess as usual presented herself at the *coucher* of the queen, she found the duc d'Anjou conversing privately with his mother. The queen immediately desired her daughter to retire to her apartment, and repeated this command three or four times. Astonished at her unwonted exclusion, Marguerite retired; but waited in an adjacent apartment until Henry had taken his departure, when she presented herself before the queen, and demanded in what respect she had had the misfortune to offend her majesty. Catherine evaded the question for some time; she then repeated, under a strict injunction of secrecy, the conversation she had had with the duke. Marguerite protested that her brother had made a false accusation; and that no attachment existed between the duc de Guise and herself; whose attentions were but the usual tribute which she received from the young cavaliers of the court. Unfortunately Marguerite's assertion on this point cannot be believed; and the united testimony of contemporary chroniclers records that, had her brothers permitted the union, the princess would joyfully have bestowed her hand on the duc de Guise. The duc d'Anjou, however, could not tolerate a rival so near the throne; and the humiliations to which Catherine had been subjected during the reign of Francis II. by the princes of Lorraine, had imbued her mind with undying enmity towards every personage who bore the hated name of Guise. Moreover, when the duc d'Anjou represented to his mother and to her chosen advisers, that maxims of sound policy and foresight forbad the further aggrandizement of a race whose ambition already had menaced the throne, by the union of its chief with a princess of the blood royal, his argument could not be refuted. Marguerite's protestations were therefore treated

[1] Mémoires de la Reyne Marguerite, liv. i.

with irony by the queen, who told the princess that her brother had wisely counselled. "Madame," replied the princess, "my brother praised my capacity ere he had tested its merit; now he wishes to deprive me of those privileges which I have earned, without fault or demerit on my part for an imaginary cause, and at the impulse of his fancy! I beg you, madame, to believe that as long as I live I will remember this evil thing that my brother has done!" Catherine then angrily commanded her daughter to make no alteration in her deportment towards Henry; as the disgrace which had befallen her was her own fault, and incurred after she had received repeated admonitions.

The duc d'Anjou subsequently made no overture of reconciliation; and Marguerite, to demonstrate her indignation, distinguished Henri de Guise by flattering condescensions, and even admitted the duke to private interviews. Nothing daunted by the frowns of Monsieur, the duke took every opportunity of displaying the splendour of his retinue and his gallant prowess in arms, or in the courtly accomplishments of the cavalier, before the eyes of the princess.

The most iniquitous device consequently was resorted to, to put an end to the *liaison* between Marguerite and the duc de Guise. The first murmurs of the abominable calumny invented to terrify the princess into submission, and from which the fame of Marguerite never recovered, was traced to du Guast, the favourite of the duc d'Anjou. It was whispered that the duc de Guise had long been the favoured lover of the princess; and that all praise was due to him for the honourable constancy of his attachment to the sister of his sovereign, when Marguerite had forgotten her royal rank to become his paramour—a calumny rendered only too plausible by the general levity of demeanour in which the princess indulged. Certain infamous allusions were, moreover,

added respecting Marguerite's conduct when at Bayonne with two officers of the king's body-guard, MM. d'Antragues and de Charny. The extreme beauty of the princess, her levity of manner, and freedom of speech, combined to give an appearance of truth to these assertions; especially when the duc d'Anjou, with much seeming reluctance and shame, avowed his belief of the slander, and deplored the profligacy of his mother's court. In examining the conduct of Marguerite at this period, justice must be done to the memory even of her whom subsequent generations have unsparingly branded with the epithets of "frail and impure." The charges relative to Charny, d'Antragues, and the duc de Guise are to be found on record only in the scandalous libels of the day emanating from the hatred felt towards the race of Valois, and the bitterness engendered by religious controversy. Whatever may have been Marguerite's subsequent derelictions from virtue after her unhappy marriage, it is to be believed that the princess at the age of seventeen, when in the camp of St. Jean d'Angely, was not in reality depraved, as these publications affirmed. Not one contemporary author of repute substantiates the accusation on his own knowledge of events; but quotes from these libellous pamphlets,[1] which were launched alone for party purposes; and in which not only is Marguerite's reputation sacrificed, but that also of many other personages of acknowledged virtue and worth.

The perturbation of Marguerite's mind was so great, that a few days after her interview with her mother she fell sick of the fever raging in the camp. The illness of his sister seemed to revive Henry's affection, and he attended her night and day with great assiduity;

[1] Such as Le Divorce Satyrique ou les Amours de la Reyne Marguerite, La Confession de Sancy, and other similar productions of infamous renown.

"but," says Marguerite, pathetically, "I made no response but by my sighs to his hypocrisy, as Brutus did to Nero when the former was dying of the poison administered to him by that tyrant." The princess was still confined to her bed when the town of St. Jean d'Angely surrendered[1] before the determined siege laid by king Charles. The town had been invested for two months, during which Charles lost ten thousand troops and one of his bravest generals, Sebastian de Luxembourg, vicomte de Martigues. The king, accompanied by queen Catherine, the duc d'Anjou, and the cardinal de Lorraine, made his entry into St. Jean on the following day.

The court then proceeded to Angers; for Charles had made sufficient experience of the discomforts and dangers of a campaign. Marguerite performed the journey reposing in a litter. At places where the king halted for the night, the princess was thus carried to her chamber by some of the principal cavaliers of the court. Charles generally helped to support the litter; and afterwards lifted his sister out on to the couch in her apartment. Throughout her illness the princess manifested the greatest aversion to her brother Henry. From this time, therefore, the king began to seek Marguerite's society; and had the life of Charles been prolonged, she doubtless would have given the duc d'Anjou reason to repent the caprice and injustice of his conduct.

[1] On the 2nd of December, 1569.

CHAPTER II.

1569—1571.

Condition of the court—Arrival of the Portuguese ambassadors—Proposals for the marriage of the princess Marguerite with Sebastian I.—Departure of the duc de Guise from court—His marriage—The duchesse de Guise—Revels of the court—Peace of 1570—Designs of the amiral de Coligny and his party—Negotiation for the marriage of Charles IX. with Elizabeth of Austria, and for that of the duc d'Anjou with the queen of England—Nuptial solemnities of Charles IX.—Progress of Monsieur to escort the imperial bride—His retinue—Elizabeth of Austria—Arrival of ambassadors from the queen of England—Discussions relative to the marriage of the duc d'Anjou—His despair and aversion to the alliance—Rupture of the negotiation—Projects of Coligny—His arrival at court—His favour with the king—Assassination of M. de Lignerolles—Negotiations with the queen of Navarre—Proceedings of Marguerite de Valois—The duc d'Alençon—Rise of the faction termed "les Politiques"—Its design, origin, and members—Dissensions of the court—Monsieur proposed as a candidate for the crown of Poland—Mission of the sieur de Balagny and of Jean Choisnin to Poland.

King Charles still continued to manifest the utmost distrust and aversion towards his brother d'Anjou. To the pleadings of Catherine in behalf of her favourite son, Charles listened with careless unconcern; or, if roused to a response by the reproaches of the queen, he purposely alluded with a mocking smile to some encounter in the recent campaigns where it was notorious that the genius of Tavannes or Biron had decided the success of the day, and complimented his good brother Henry on his valour and sagacity. The court poets, nevertheless, continued to celebrate the praises

of the duke; while the clergy of the realm lauded from their pulpits the heroism displayed by the young prince. Catherine did all in her power to allay this enthusiasm, which had been kindled throughout the realm rather in deference to what were supposed to be the wishes of the court, than from any conviction entertained by the people that in Henri d'Anjou, God had raised a special defender of their ancient faith. The duke and his favourite, du Guast, however, felt profound uneasiness at the increasing umbrage shown by Charles; and at the resentment manifested by the princess Marguerite. Believing that du Guast had been her perfidious defamer, Marguerite felt herself justified in excluding him from her presence; and no protestation to the contrary offered by the favourite or by his royal master succeeded in pacifying the princess. Although there can be no doubt that du Guast, incited by Monsieur, was the first propagator of the slander which bore such deadly fruit, the duc de Guise and his family, nevertheless, did not meet the accusation with prompt denial; neither did they avenge the insult, as might have been anticipated from princes so powerful and valorous. This tacit connivance, or indifference, was afterwards used against the duc de Guise to exasperate the mind of the king; and to make him believe that the former had been accessory to the whole proceeding. It seems to have been the belief of the princes of Lorraine that the fair fame of the princess being thus impugned, Catherine and Charles would, in consequence, have fewer scruples in bestowing her hand on a subject; while the duke's reported *liaison* with a princess so beautiful and fastidious—one, moreover, whom he hoped to call his wife, exalted his knightly repute above that of every other cavalier of the court. Charles, who now found a ready sympathizer in his sister for the alleged assumptions of Monsieur, constantly sought her society; and seated by Marguerite's couch

he listened approvingly to her comments on the wrong perpetrated by her brother d'Anjou. Monsieur redoubled his assiduity to win back his sister; and even feigned a violent resentment against du Guast. He overwhelmed the duc de Guise with flattering attentions; and demeaned himself humbly towards the king. To escape from the meshes of the net which his own perfidy had woven, became the anxious care of Monsieur; and his proceedings at this period certainly belie not the duke's after-repute for false-hearted treachery. It was necessary, in the first place, to rouse the jealous indignation of the king against the pretensions of Guise; a displeasure which the duke believed must eventually recoil, in measure, upon the princess Marguerite herself. Catherine, therefore, frequently lamented, in the presence of Charles, the ambitious enterprises of the princes of Lorraine, which she declared tended to the overthrow of the royal dynasty of the Valois. She commented on the imprudence which Charles's royal father had committed in giving his second daughter, Claude, to a prince of the house of Lorraine;[1] and feigned to dread lest the daily augmenting popularity of the duc de Guise should render his demand for the hand of Marguerite irresistible. Monsieur on his side appeared to withdraw opposition to the duke's suit. He frequently compelled Guise to attend him to the chamber of the princess, addressing the duke as *mon frère*. "Would to God that thou wert indeed my brother!" exclaimed Monsieur, hypocritically, on one occasion, in the presence of Charles.[2]

Meantime ambassadors arrived from the court of Portugal to enter into negotiation for the hand of Mar-

[1] The princess Claude, second daughter of Henry II. and Catherine de Medici, married, in 1558, Charles II. duke of Lorraine, son of Francis I. duke of Lorraine and of Christina of Denmark, niece of the emperor Charles V.

[2] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite, liv. i.

guerite, for their youthful king don Sebastian.[1] By command of the queen her mother, Marguerite put on magnificent attire to receive the envoys; and, moreover, declared herself rejoiced to learn the nature of their mission. The duc d'Anjou, however, insidiously asserted that his sister's consent was feigned, the better to conceal her steadfast resolution to give herself only to the duc de Guise. The queen, therefore, one day reproached her daughter for her insincere professions; which her majesty declared were evident by her demeanour towards the ambassadors. "Madame!" replied the princess, "I have in this affair no will but your majesty's —that which is agreeable to you will be most in accord with my own desire!" "*Ma fille,*" rejoined the queen, angrily, "that which you utter proceeds not from your heart. I know that M. le cardinal de Lorraine has persuaded you to accept only his nephew. That marriage, however, shall never be!" Marguerite replied by requesting her mother to hasten the negotiation for her marriage in Portugal, when she would witness her obedience. The Portuguese ambassadors, however, were not provided with absolute powers to conclude a matrimonial treaty. Their mission was to see the princess—the rumour of whose extraordinary beauty had created a sensation at the court of Lisbon—to observe Marguerite's manners and inclination; and to send a report of their opinions regarding the eligibility of the alliance and the best method of achieving the same. The distinguished favour which Marguerite continued perversely to show towards the duc de Guise; her alienation from her brother d'Anjou, whose hostile feelings towards the princes of Lorraine were openly canvassed; and the belief everywhere prevalent that finally Guise would obtain the hand of the princess, produced, as

[1] Son of John prince of Brazil, killed in 1554, and of doña Juaña, sister of Philip II., king of Spain.

might be expected, an adverse impression on the minds of the Portuguese envoys. The negotiation consequently made little progress; a fact which was adroitly seized by Monsieur to increase the displeasure already felt by Charles, who also began to reproach his sister for the insincerity of her conduct. Marguerite protested with tears that she was ready to give her consent to any marriage which it might please the king and her mother to propose; adding, that the assiduity of the duc de Guise "was owing to the encouragement treacherously given to him lately by M. d'Anjou."[1] Nevertheless, it is recorded on apparently unimpeachable testimony, that Marguerite continued privately to assure the duc de Guise of her unchangeable fidelity; and of her resolution only to bestow her hand on himself. Marguerite asserts in her memoirs that, at this juncture she did the only two things open to her, to prove the sincerity of her acceptance of the Portuguese alliance—she wrote to her sister Claude, duchesse de Lorraine, entreating her to persuade M. de Guise to conclude a marriage between himself and the princesse de Porcien, and to quit the court for a season. In her anxious self-vindication from the charges preferred by her brother's favourite M. du Guast, Marguerite's negligent allusions to the suit of the duc de Guise, and her assertions of absolute indifference towards him, injure her cause; for the testimony of contemporary writers is too unanimous to leave a doubt on the mind that Guise, the bravest and most gifted of Charles's courtiers, had produced an impression on the heart of Marguerite, the traces of which were never effaced.

The Portuguese envoys, meantime, quitted Angers, and returned to their own country, leaving the matter of the alliance in suspense. Catherine shortly after their audience of farewell entered the cabinet of the

[1] Mém. de Marguerite de Valois, liv. i.

king her son, attended by the duc d'Anjou, and held a private conference of some hours. During the same day Charles, accompanied by Monsieur, the princess Marguerite, Guise, the grand prior of France Henri d'Angoulême, and others of the court, partook of the diversion of the chase in the noble forests which at that period were adjacent to the city of Angers. Marguerite, as usual, was attended by the duc de Guise, who, it was observed, occasionally placed his hand on the rein of her palfrey while conversing with the princess in confidential tones. The glance of the king rested many times on his sister as she rode joyously beneath the arching avenues of the forest. On his return Charles was followed to his chamber by Monsieur and by his illegitimate brother, Henri d'Angoulême, grand prior of France. The king sat for some time absorbed in meditation; at length his eye rested on two hunting-knives which a page had deposited on a table in the chamber. With a fierce oath the king exclaimed, addressing the prior, "Henri, thou seest those weapons? Well! I swear that one shall slay thee if to-morrow at the chase thou dost not with the other kill M. de Guise!"[1] The king, it is asserted, then proceeded to discuss his project, uttering most indignant protests that *un petit galant* like the duc de Guise should presume to aspire to the hand of his sister or to compromise her reputation. Charles's words were overheard by one of his *valets-de-chambre*, who hastened to report them to the duchesse de Nemours,[2] mother of the duc de Guise, who was in waiting upon queen Catherine.

The duchess possessed great insight into the cha-

[1] Mathieu: Vie de Charles IX., liv. vi. p. 333. Brantôme.

[2] Anne d'Esté, daughter of Ercole II. duc de Ferrara, and of Renée de France, daughter of Louis XII. and Anne de Bretagne, widow of François duc de Guise.

racter of the duc d'Anjou; and believing that jealous hatred would impel the latter to commit any deed of violence, she sent for her son, and imparted the intelligence. The duke laughed at and ridiculed the suggestion; "On n'osera!" replied he—words of fatal security, which, acted upon at a later period of his career, cost the duke his life. Private information also had been conveyed to madame de Nemours that the duc d'Anjou intended with his own hand to slay the duke as he passed through a dark gallery of the château leading to the apartments occupied by the princess. Undismayed by these warnings, the duc de Guise arrayed himself sumptuously, and that same evening repaired to the royal saloon to pay his homage to queen Catherine. At the door he was met by king Charles, who imperiously demanded "whither he was going?" "Sire," replied Guise, "I am here to serve your gracious majesty!" "Monseigneur! you may depart. I have no need of your service!" rejoined the king.[1] The duke bowed, but prudently made no reply. He then retired, and gave orders for instant departure from Angers. A secret message, meantime, from the grand prior, or, it is asserted by some, from the princess Marguerite herself, to the effect that "if the duke wished to preserve his life, he must immediately conclude his marriage with madame de Porcien," confirmed the duke in his resolve to leave the court. Attended by a small retinue of faithful friends, the duke secretly set out; and after a hurried journey, disturbed by perpetual misgivings relative to the probability of a surprise from M. d'Anjou, he arrived safely at the hôtel de Nemours in Paris.

Catherine de Cleves, princesse de Porcien, whose alliance was so unwillingly contemplated by the duke, had, nevertheless, the most gallant cavaliers of the court at her feet. The second daughter and co-heiress of the duc de

[1] Davila: Hist. des Guerres civiles de France, tome i.

Nevers, by Marguerite de Bourbon, aunt of the king of Navarre, the birth and wealth of the princess were enhanced by her beauty and her varied accomplishments. Her elder sister, Henriette, was the consort of Louis de Gonzaga,[1] who in right of his wife assumed the title of duc de Nevers. Her youngest sister was Marie, the affianced consort of the young prince de Condé. Catherine de Cleves had espoused, when very young, Antoine de Croy prince de Porcien, one of the most noted of the Huguenot leaders. During the lifetime of the prince, Catherine made profession of his creed; though the facility with which she joined the Romish church during the early days of her widowhood, at the persuasion of Catherine de Medici, proves that her adoption of the reformed tenets was rather in deference to the desire of her husband than from conviction of their truth. The prince was devotedly attached to his wife; and during the last few months of his life showed much jealous umbrage at the pleasure which Catherine took in the society of the duc de Guise; and at the admiration evinced in the deportment of the latter.

The princess became a widow in 1564. On his death-bed the prince de Porcien had made it his last request that his widow would refrain from bestowing her hand and her wealth upon his enemy Henri de Lorraine, in case she were solicited so to do; an event which the prince predicted. No sooner, however, had her period of mourning expired, than Catherine on every occasion sought the society of Guise; and accepted with alacrity the half proposals made by the duke's mother, Anne d'Esté, who beheld with grief and disapprobation her son's designs relative to Marguerite de Valois. The imprudent boast of the cardinal de Lorraine, in reference to his nephew's marriage with Marguerite, and that already accomplished, of Claude, second daughter of

[1] Brother of the marquis of Mantua.

the queen, with the young duc de Lorraine—*L'ainé a eu l'ainée: le cadet aura la cadette!*—occasioned the duchesse de Nemours serious solicitude: and she had deemed it even requisite to ask an audience of Catherine, to apologize for so unguarded a declaration from her brother-in-law. The duchess, therefore, followed her son to Paris, fully resolved to effect this marriage with the princesse de Porcien; a project promoted by the duchesse de Lorraine, to whose influence Marguerite states that she had appealed to relieve her from the embarrassment of her position, by inducing the duc de Guise either to marry or to quit the court. Madame de Nemours, on her arrival in the capital, sent for the princesse de Porcien, and frankly stating the dilemma in which the duke found himself, she prayed the beautiful young widow to consent to an immediate marriage; and even not to quit the hôtel de Nemours until the ceremony had been performed which made her the consort of the duc de Guise. The princess consented; and the duke, therefore, had no alternative but to accept the hand so generously tendered in his hour of peril. It is recorded, however, that threats, bitter and of most ominous import, escaped Guise relative to Monsieur; whose conduct he swore to hold in eternal memory, and to avenge to his dying day. On the evening of the day following his departure from Angers the duke's marriage with Catherine de Cleves was accomplished, the contract being drawn and signed, and the ceremony performed, within the space of six hours. A few days subsequently, the duc and duchesse de Guise were received by their majesties at St. Germain with great apparent regard. A series of sumptuous *fêtes* were given in honour of the bride and bridegroom by Catherine, at which Monsieur made himself conspicuous by his gallant attentions to the new duchesse de Guise; while he overwhelmed her husband with flattering civilities. There exists indirect proof

that Marguerite suffered severely at this period from a second attack of the malady with which she had been assailed at Angers—a low fever; for there is little doubt that her affection was given to the duc de Guise, and that subsequently no other attachment was able to compensate the princess for his involuntary defection.

The persevering enmity shown throughout life towards Henri de Valois by his sister Marguerite, and by the duc de Guise, being the source and origin of most of the subsequent troubles, the history of the primary cause of their alienation has been dwelt upon at length. The extravagant revels given by the court on the occasion of the marriage of Guise, drew from the maréchal de Tavannes the coarse but forcible rebuke of "Sire! I will next give your majesty a revel; but, instead of the songs of musical choirs and the sight of theatrical clouds, I will engage true minstrels, who shall tell you truth. Your courtiers are fools; and even your majesty expends money in festivals and on pompous masques while the soldiers, *gendarmerie*, and mercenary troops in your realm are not paid. You are, therefore, beaten by your enemies, who laugh to scorn your prodigalities and the honours which you bestow upon worthless personages. The courtiers," continued the marshal, ironically, "every two years or so, clamour for bounteous recompence, and wherefore?—the only reason and plausible pretext, forsooth, which they can allege is, that they have during this interval well stared at your majesty." [1]

Meantime a peace was concluded between the king and the Huguenot chieftains, in despite of the protests of the queen of Navarre and the more wary leaders of the Protestant party. The terms of peace demanded by Coligny before the battle of Moncontour were accepted by the king without demur. The admiral

[1] Mém. de Tavannes.

was overwhelmed with flattering caresses, and was almost entreated by his sovereign to forget the past treachery of the court, and to confide in its present promises. The king loudly declared that it was his present intention to conciliate all his subjects; to grant liberty of conscience to his loyal Huguenots; and to effect a marriage between Marguerite his sister, and the young prince of Navarre, son of Jeanne d'Albret. The peace, therefore, was sworn to by king Charles, his mother, and the duc d'Anjou, in the chapel of St. Germain-en-Laye, on the 19th day of August, 1570, and proclaimed at La Rochelle, in the presence of the queen of Navarre, on the 26th of the same month.[1] Catherine de Medici and her son Henri acquiesced with apparent good grace in a pacification requisite for the safety of the realm. A temporary suspension of arms, moreover, coincided well with the ulterior intentions of the queen-mother. A war of many months duration, signalized by two pitched battles gained by the royal forces, had proved insufficient to cripple the resources of the Huguenot leaders and their allies. The armies of Coligny even menaced the capital. The admiral triumphantly led his valiant Huguenots across the Loire, and had encamped between Montargis and Châtillon, within a few days march of Paris. The queen of Navarre, from La Rochelle, rendered heroic aid to the cause. Her manifestoes roused the martial spirit of the troops; while her eloquent appeals for succour to the principal foreign courts of Europe were seldom perused in vain. Above all, Catherine comprehended that the continuance of the war was likely to be detrimental to the interests of Monsieur. The king, jealous of his brother's military renown, beheld with displeasure Henri's attempts to win popularity. The

[1] Pierre de l'Estoile: Mém. pour l'Histoire de France. See Life of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, p. 225, et seq. vol. ii.

duc de Guise and Gondy comte de la Tour,[1] one of Catherine's Italian *protégés,* did all in their power to increase Charles's umbrage; and covertly they incited him to shower the numberless marks of regard upon Coligny which occasioned such disquietude to the queen-mother. Catherine, however, felt her power over the mind of her son—she temporized; but it was only thereafter to act with a deeper knowledge and insight into the designs of her enemies when her hour for retribution arrived.

Monsieur meanwhile exhibited the greatest splendour in his attire and mode of living. His genial manner, his courtly *savoir,* and magnificent figure rendered him the most popular personage of the court. His profusion and liberality eclipsed that of the king; while his well-chosen words glided so harmoniously on the ear of the listener as to render all, with but few exceptions, oblivious of the notorious insincerity of these the duke's honeyed speeches. Henry's devotion to his mother was unwearied. Always at Catherine's side, he was ready to escort her in public, to obey her behests, or to confer in private. The queen's wishes and interests seemed in all things identical with those of Henry. Proud of the duke's manly beauty and of his devotion, Catherine loved her son with that fervent strength of which a character resolute as her own was capable.

As soon as the conclusion of peace permitted, Catherine commenced active negotiations for the marriage of her three children—king Charles, the duc d'Anjou, and madame Marguerite. The negotiation for the alliance of the latter with the king of Portugal concluded in mutual disgust and displeasure. The Portuguese ambassadors, though they carried back to their country a glowing description of Marguerite's charms, yet their

[1] Charles de Gondy, seigneur de la Tour, brother of the comte de Retz. He died June 13, 1574, of grief for the loss of his master Charles IX.

relation of her volatile character and of her evident inclination for the duc de Guise, when considered in conjunction with the displeasure evinced by Philip II. at the proposed alliance of don Sebastian with a French princess, determined the queen-regent Catherine[1] to decline further overtures. Proposals therefore were by the king's command made by Catherine de Medici for the marriage of her daughter with the prince of Navarre; and the maréchal de Cossé was sent to La Rochelle to lay the offers of the queen before Jeanne d'Albret. The marriage, however, which immediately occupied the attention of the court was that of the king himself with the archduchess Elizabeth of Austria, daughter of the emperor Maximilian II. and sister of the queen of Spain. To conciliate the queen of England, Catherine had pretended to offer her the hand of king Charles; as she thus hoped to induce Elizabeth to relax in her efforts to promote the triumph of the Huguenot cause in France and the Low Countries. Elizabeth replied, after some demur, during which the matter of the alliance was debated in the councils of France and England, "that his Christian majesty was at once a prince too exalted and too small for her alliance;"[2] meaning, as it was explained to queen Catherine, that the dignity of the king of France was so great that he could never leave his own realm to reside in England; and that his majesty was too young to espouse a princess who had accomplished her thirty-eighth year. Notwithstanding the wisdom and propriety of this reply, Catherine, as soon as the king's marriage with Elizabeth of Austria was confirmed, made renewed overtures to queen Elizabeth that she would be pleased to bestow her hand in

[1] Catherine of Hapsburg, daughter of the archduke Philip king of Spain, and of doña Juaña, daughter and heiress of Ferdinand and Isabella—and sister of the emperor Charles V.

[2] Mém. de l'Etat de la France. Mezeray: Vie de Charles IX.

marriage on the duc d'Anjou. It had been predicted to Catherine that all her sons should wear a crown. The commencement of this prediction had been apparently fulfilled by the premature decease of Francis II.; while the queen's perfumer and astrologer, Cosmo Ruggieri,[1] made ominous comment on the failing health of king Charles. After Charles, in order of succession, came Catherine's favourite son Henri. The maternal fears of the queen were therefore strongly moved; for after this beloved child there yet remained to her another son, the youthful duc d'Alençon, whom she had hitherto treated with systematic disregard. To anticipate and to accomplish this prediction became Catherine's anxious desire, by providing crowns for her sons Henri and François. The queen, though endowed with an intellect stern and to be domineered over by no one, was superstitious. She was a devout believer in signs and portents; while her mind, ever acute and imperious when occupied on matters of mundane interest, shrank before the alleged supernatural powers of Ruggieri and his mysterious incantations. Catherine consequently displayed the most ardent desire to place the crown matrimonial of England on her son's brow. She therefore sent private instructions to the cardinal de Châtillon, who still remained an exile in England, to promote the alliance and to seek by every means to win the favour of Elizabeth and the co-operation of the English council. As for the duc d'Anjou, his days were spent in revels and dissipation rather than in devising expedients to recommend himself to the favour of the queen of Eng-

[1] Cosmo Ruggieri, a Florentine by birth. This impostor rose to unexampled influence through the favour of the queen-mother, though in 1574 he was involved in the criminal proceedings taken against la Mole and Cocconas, for being accomplices of the duc d'Alençon in an intended alliance with Condé and the Huguenots. Ruggieri, after his deliverance, was made abbé de St. Mahé. He died in misery at Paris during the year 1614, at the age of 80.

land. The beautiful mademoiselle de Châteauneuf was now publicly acknowledged as his *maîtresse-en-titre*, and exercised her empire over the court in despotic form, albeit in profound subservience to the wishes of Catherine.

About the middle of the month of November, 1570, the court quitted Blois and journeyed to the frontier, for the solemnization of the marriage of Charles IX. with Elizabeth of Austria. On the 22nd day of October the princess had been betrothed to Charles in the cathedral of Spires, the archduke Ferdinand officiating as the king's proxy. Throughout the negotiations Charles manifested intense eagerness. In his impetuous language he had several times hinted to the queen-mother, "that if the design of the alliance were frustrated, he should know to whom to attribute the disappointment;" alluding, as the queen well understood, to Monsieur and the projects which the king often plainly intimated that he believed his brother entertained on the crown of France. The princess set out from Spires on the 24th of October. She was attended by a numerous and imposing suite, the principal members of which were the archbishop-elector of Mayence, the bishop of Strasbourg, the marquis of Baden, and the countesses of Arembourg and Madruzio. It had been originally decided that the marriage festivities should be holden at Compiègne; a plan suddenly changed by Charles out of regard for the additional fatigue which would thereby be entailed on Elizabeth's illustrious escort, personages little accustomed to travel. The frontier town of Mezières was accordingly selected instead; and thither Charles, the queen-mother, and the princess Marguerite repaired to wait the arrival of the bride; while Monsieur and the duc d'Alençon proceeded to Sedan to receive the new queen.

The duc d'Anjou was attended by Cheverny,[1] chancellor of his duchy of Anjou; a man of courtly demeanour, subtle, insinuating, and well versed in intrigue, and whose influence over his royal master was supreme. It was partly owing to the counsels of Cheverny that Henry had adopted that line of political partisanship which gave such umbrage to king Charles. When the king favoured the Huguenot chieftains, Monsieur, by a system of sarcastic reserve, boldly indicated his dissent. After the peace of St. Germain, 1570, when Coligny paid his first visit to the court, the bland irony of the congratulatory words addressed by Monsieur to the admiral, his late opponent, on the cordial greeting he had received from Charles, were also ascribed to the counsels of Cheverny. In the duke's suite were, moreover, the marquis de Guast, the sieurs de Villequier and de la Valette, and the captain of Henry's guard of fifty lances, the sieur de Lignerolles, all gallant cavaliers, who emulated their royal master in love of profligate intrigue and splendour of attire. On the 24th day of November the duc d'Anjou quitted Sedan; and thus attended, proceeded to meet the queen at a village named Balau, about two leagues from the town. Elizabeth rode in a coach lined with grey velvet and drawn by four Hungarian horses. She was attended by the comtesse de Fiesque,[2] lady of honour to queen Catherine, and by the countess of Arembourg.[3] Charles's ambassador, Albert de Gondy, comte de Retz, rode on the right of the queen's coach. When the young queen perceived the duke, it was ob-

[1] Philippe Herault de Cheverny, chancelier de l'ordre de St. Michel, and lord keeper of the great seal in 1578; chancellor of France in 1583. He died, June, 1599, at the age of 72 years.

[2] Alphonsina Strozzi.

[3] Marguerite de la Marck, widow of Jean de Ligne, comte d'Arembourg, killed, in 1568, at the battle of Hagesto in Friesland.

served that a vivid colour suffused her cheeks, and that she regarded him long and steadily. Monsieur dismounted from his horse, and followed by his brother and the ducs de Lorraine and de Guise, approached the queen's chariot, and first kissing her majesty's hand, added some words of compliment, which were translated into German for the queen by the countess of Arembourg. "The German lords," says the chronicler,[1] "began then loudly to praise the chivalrous demeanour of M. d'Anjou, he having also at so youthful an age executed such high deeds, the renown of which had penetrated throughout their country. Not only, said they, had the deportment of Monseigneur surpassed in dignity and comeliness their most sanguine expectations, but it promised hereafter achievements still more notable."

The cortége then proceeded to Sedan, where Elizabeth was to spend the night. King Charles, meantime, anxious to behold his betrothed bride, quitted Mezières in disguise, and arrived at Sedan in time to see the queen descend from her coach at the castle, which appertained to the duc de Bouillon. The queen alighted with the assistance of Monsieur and the duc de Lorraine, and ascended the steps leading to the portal of the castle. An intimation having been conveyed to the duke of the king's presence, Monsieur began to discourse, and pointed out to her majesty the most ancient part of the castle, and so compelled her to turn towards the spot where Charles stood concealed. He then again gallantly presented his hand, and led her majesty into the great hall of the castle, contriving to pass close to the king. Elizabeth and her German ladies then

[1] Godefroy ; Grand Cérém. de France—Bénédiction nuptiale du Roy Charles IX. et de Madame Elizabeth d'Autriche, fille de l'Empereur Maximilian II., tome ii. Mém. de l'Etat de France, attribués à Jean de Serres, tome i. fol. 15.

retired to the apartments prepared for them; the queen feeling greatly the fatigue of her journey from Spires.

Charles, after having thus satisfied his curiosity relative to his bride, returned to Mezières, expressing himself very well content with her personal charms and demeanour. Elizabeth is not celebrated for her beauty. She possessed, however, a brilliant complexion, adorned by the attractive freshness of youth. Her eyes were blue, large, and languishing; and her face, though full and round, was animated. A sojourn of a few years at the court of France, however, soon banished Elizabeth's smiles, and imprinted on her comely face an air of abstraction and melancholy. On her arrival in France Elizabeth suffered from the great disadvantage of not understanding French. She spoke her native German and the Spanish language with ease and facility; she also understood a little Latin, which at first formed her only mode of communication with the king her husband. With her mother-in-law queen Catherine, Elizabeth conversed in Spanish. Six months after her arrival in France, however, the queen was able to sustain a conversation in French; for such was the perseverance of Elizabeth's character, that, sensible of her deficiency, and the false position in which it placed her, she never relaxed in diligence until this obstacle was overcome. Elizabeth possessed a good and benevolent heart. Her temper was kind, equable, but undemonstrative. At the period of her arrival in France to preside nominally over the most profligate court in Europe, Elizabeth's simplicity of manners, and her limited knowledge of the world, combined to deprive her of the importance which was her right. Her influence was silently, almost secretly exercised, whenever Elizabeth ventured to oppose the projects of the queen-mother or of Catherine's favourite son. The king, nevertheless, manifested the greatest affection for his consort, and treated her with

marked homage. Yet Charles did not give his young wife credit for the many estimable qualities which she possessed. Elizabeth's retiring and modest worth was eclipsed by the brilliant talents of her able mother-in-law. After Charles's marriage-contract had been signed, some friend carried the portrait of the young archduchess to Marie Touchet, the king's mistress. Marie eagerly gazed on the placid features of the princess with whose auspicious advent it was confidently predicted that her own reign would close. A smile dwelt on the lips of the beautiful Marie as she returned the picture to its owner: "*Bah! cette Allemande-là ne me fait pas mal à la tête!*"[1] exclaimed she, with contemptuous indifference. Apparently this was likewise the impression imbibed by Monsieur after his interview with his sister-in-law, as it is stated that he was heard to compare the beauty and grace of his sister Marguerite with the attractions of the queen, in terms eminently flattering to the former. Meantime the duc d'Anjou sent to invite the ambassadors, lords, &c., in the suite of Elizabeth to a grand repast, on the evening after their arrival at Sedan. The duke's envoy to the elector-archbishop was his chancellor, Cheverny, who made an harangue to the weary prelate which lasted during the space of two hours! Cheverny, by command of his royal master, expatiated on the happy auguries to be derived from the alliance between Charles and Elizabeth, "the issue both of royal and imperial houses," which union must compel all minor potentates of Europe to live henceforth in amity and concord. The elector, who, being an old man, had suffered extremely from the fatigue of travelling, had already retired to his apartment for the night; but on learning the quality and mission of his visitor, he immediately admitted him to his presence, and accepted

[1] Histoire de Charles IX., par Papyre Masson.

the courteous invitation of Monsieur. The banquet was holden in the grand hall of the castle of Sedan, Monsieur presiding at the top of the festive board, having his brother the duc d'Alençon on his right, his brother-in-law the duc de Lorraine on his left hand, and the elector-archbishop of Mayence opposite. Cheverny acted as interpreter; and the day being Friday, the conversation at table, we are told, was limited to a discussion on the relative merits of the fish eaten on fast-days by the French and German people.[1]

The following day the queen proceeded to Mezières, where she was received with pomp and cordiality by queen Catherine, accompanied by her daughters Marguerite and the duchesse de Lorraine. Catherine taking the young queen by the hand, led her into an adjacent apartment, where she presented her to the king. Charles advanced and embraced his bride, adding some words of compliment and congratulation, which were translated by the keeper of the privy seal, Morvilliers, into the Latin tongue. The king drew his bride apart, standing in the embrasure of a window, where, with the aid of the queen-mother, they conversed together for some interval. Elizabeth then retired to the apartment allotted to her to prepare for the sumptuous banquet and ball with which her arrival was to be celebrated.

On the following morning, November 26th, the solemnity of the espousals of the royal pair was performed in the church of Notre Dame de Mezières by the cardinal de Bourbon. The pageant was of the most gorgeous description. The bride was conducted to the altar supported by the duc d'Anjou and his brother the duc d'Alençon. Monsieur wore a royal

[1] Godefroy: Grand Cérém. de France—Bénédiction nuptiale de Charles IX. et d'Elisabeth d'Autriche, tome ii. Ibid—MSS. Bibl. Imp.

mantle of purple velvet lined with *loup cervier;* and his handsome person and ingratiating manners excited shouts of applause from the multitudes collected to view the pageant. At the ball, which terminated the rejoicings of the day, the magnificence displayed by Monsieur was admiringly commented upon by all, save by the king alone. He was attended by a great suite of gentlemen attired in the duke's colours, green, black, and white. They wore short green velvet cloaks, and lace ruffs, most elaborately adorned with *passementerie* and heraldic devices. The king first led out his bride to the dance. The train of Elizabeth's royal mantle, which was twenty yards long, was borne after her by two gentlemen—the duc de Montmorency and M. de Chauny. The duc d'Anjou followed, dancing with his sister madame Claude duchesse de Lorraine. The princess Marguerite danced with her brother d'Alençon, and afterwards with the duc de Guise.[1] Throughout the detail of these royal espousals, the names of Monsieur and his sister Marguerite are never associated; the most complete alienation seems to have subsisted between them,—a feeling which Catherine did all in her power to allay. The duke, thoughtless, vindictive, and presuming on his position and repute, scorned to conciliate his sister; while Marguerite treasured with bitter animosity the memory of the wrong which he had so unscrupulously inflicted.

On the 29th day of November the court quitted Mezières, and journeyed to Villars Cotterets, where the royal pair sojourned until the period fixed for the coronation of the queen at St. Denis, March 25, 1571, and her majesty's entry into Paris. From St. Germain the king proceeded to Blois, to receive the ambassadors

[1] Godefroy: Discours du Mariage de Charles IX. avec Madame Elisabeth, fille de l'Empereur Maximilian II., par M. Pinart, Secrétaire d'Etat.

sent by queen Elizabeth to treat of the proposed marriage between herself and the duc d'Anjou. Elizabeth's envoy was Robert Dudley, afterwards earl of Leicester, whose own avowed admiration of his royal mistress rendered him, it may be supposed, no very ardent advocate for the alliance he was sent to negotiate. The partisans of Monsieur contemplated the design of his marriage with the queen of England with the greatest displeasure. They averred that the project emanated from the treasonable machinations of Coligny and the queen of Navarre; who, finding in Monsieur a perpetual and bitter adversary, had planned his exile to accomplish their design of seizing the person of the king, and directing the government, to the exclusion of the queen-mother and Charles's most attached counsellors professing the orthodox faith. Whilst the duc d'Anjou remained in the realm the war against Spain in support of the revolt in the Low Countries—a campaign constantly demanded by Coligny—became impossible. Charles, although these objections were frequently discussed in his presence, yet warmly supported the projected alliance. It has been asserted that the king did so only as a veil to hide the resolutions already taken to destroy by a bloody *coup d'état* the chieftains of the reformed faith. But at this period nothing seemed further from accomplishment or more chimerical, than the requisite junction of circumstances, which at a later season rendered possible the massacre that shed the blood of some of the noblest and most loyal of Charles's subjects. The queen of Navarre in the previous month of December, 1570, had returned all but a decided negative to the proposal for the union of her son with Marguerite de Valois. In sullen discontent the leaders of the Huguenots assembled round the valiant Jeanne d'Albret in La Rochelle, heedless of the displeasure and the threats of the court. Neither the

plausible words of king Charles nor the entreaties of the amiral de Coligny—who had been completely won by the condescensions of his sovereign, and the confidential detail by the latter of his grievances against the queen-mother and Monsieur—had power to move the determination of the queen of Navarre not to visit the court. The marriage of the prince of Béarn and madame Marguerite, and the still more improbable event of the gathering of the flower of the Huguenot chivalry in Paris, were conditions essentially requisite for the execution of the proposed massacre. The more earnestly this dark page of history is studied, the more palpable does it appear that, step by step, during the subsequent months, Catherine and her son Henry were led by the urgency created by their own crooked policy to that climax, when their destruction or that of their political opponents became unavoidable. The king, therefore, at this period was probably sincere in his desire to marry his brother to the queen of England, perceiving therein a ready means of ridding his realm of a rival whom he at once dreaded and despised. The queen-mother, on the other hand, disturbed at the growing ascendency of Coligny over the mind of the king, and fearing that Monsieur while absent in England, would lose the popularity he had acquired—more through the affability of his deportment than from any sterling qualities he exhibited—daily showed greater disinclination to discuss the articles of the proposed treaty of alliance with the English ambassador-extraordinary. The marriage articles sanctioned by Elizabeth and the English privy council were identical with those accepted by Philip II. of Spain on his union with Mary Tudor, the additional stipulation being added—that the queen of England covenanted to be married according to the rites of the Anglican church, without the intervention of Romish priest whatever. No visions of

kingly state could, however, reconcile Monsieur to accept the hand of the queen of England. Her sternness of character and severity of speech, and her age, which was nearly double his own, inspired him with sentiments of dread and loathing. The witty young cavaliers of his suite composed epigrams and *bons mots* innumerable on the disparity of years, and the want of personal charms in the bride proposed for their royal master. The duke, therefore, sent in great haste to ask the advice of the maréchal de Tavannes, who, since the campaign of 1568, had exercised considerable influence over the mind of Monsieur. Tavannes, by way of response, bluntly desired the duke to remember the intimate *liaison* subsisting between the English heretics and the French Huguenots, and to ponder on the harm he had inflicted on the latter; also not to forget the galling affronts which had befallen king Philip during the period of his sojourn in England. He therefore advised his royal highness to withdraw skilfully from the proposed alliance as preposterous and impolitic. "Monseigneur," added Tavannes, unable to refrain from the utterance of one of his coarse jests, "I have the alternative, if this marriage is to proceed. Milord Robert[1] wishes to make you the husband of his mistress the queen of England; well, then, insist that he in his turn shall marry la Châteauneuf, your mistress! You will then return in measure the kindness which he wishes to press upon you!"[2] The project of his establishment in England became at length so overwhelming to Monsieur, that he one day sought an audience of the king, when, after many protestations of his fidelity and attachment, he besought permission to decline the proposed alliance. "Monseigneur, if you command me to accept this marriage, I shall obey your majesty; but I know that I shall not survive my exile four months. I would

[1] Lord Robert Dudley.

[2] Mém. de Tavannes, chap. xxiv.

rather be nothing in France, with permission only to die in your service, rather than depart into England!" exclaimed the duke emphatically.[1] The king made no reply: authorized, however, by the sanction of Catherine de Medici, the duc d'Anjou on the following day sent word to the ambassador Walsingham, "that unless he were guaranteed the free exercise of the Roman Catholic religion when in England, he must decline the alliance." Upon receiving this message Walsingham and Lord Robert Dudley waited upon the queen-mother to remonstrate. They observed to her majesty that from the first it had been distinctly set forth that M. le duc must conform to the established religion of the realm of England, in case he aspired to espouse the queen their mistress. That the mass had been now so long discontinued in England, that to revive it again would create tumults and perils very prejudicial to the welfare and repose of the queen their mistress. Catherine hypocritically replied, "that her son d'Anjou was not now in reality inimical to the reformed faith; and still less, therefore, would he show himself a bigoted upholder of his own religion, when he should be better instructed as regarded the former: nevertheless, the duke had felt himself obliged to say what he had done to content the pope and the king of Spain, who, failing that protest, would have regarded him as an atheist, or at any rate as one devoid of principle whatever, when they perceived that without certainty of marriage with the queen of England he was ready to abandon the faith of his fathers."[2] The duke eventually limited his demand to the request that permission might be granted him to hear mass daily in his chamber when in England. The

[1] Mém. de Tavannes, chap. xxiv.

[2] Le Tocsain contre les Massacreurs, addressé à tous les Princes Chrétiens. Mém. de Chiverny. De Thou—Hist. de son Temps. La Poplinière. Hume. Strype.

ambassadors immediately sent to ask instructions from their royal mistress; but during the delay events arose which totally put an end to the negotiation.

About the middle of June, 1571, the amiral de Coligny, yielding to the reiterated solicitations of the king, arrived at Blois. This proceeding on the part of Coligny was regarded with surprise and consternation by the queen of Navarre, by Montgomery, and by all the principal Protestant leaders. The articles of the recent peace had been imperfectly executed; religious persecution continued in many of the principal towns of the realm; and no redress was to be obtained by the oppressed Huguenots. Neither, to the penetrating eye of Jeanne d'Albret, did the attitude of Catherine and her sons diminish the force of her forebodings. The contempt which the king now manifested on most occasions for his mother's counsels, appeared to the queen of Navarre to be a mood too suddenly adopted, and pregnant with consequences too vast in their realization to be sincere or permanent. The frenzied violence of Charles's character, and the power possessed by the queen-mother over the minds of her children, were well appreciated by Jeanne d'Albret. The warmth of Catherine's friendly declarations towards herself; and the oblivion which the queen magnanimously professed to extend over the incidents of the late civil contest, served as an additional incentive to caution and unbelief to one who, like the queen of Navarre, had had long experience of the tenacity of Catherine's resentments. All representations and entreaties, however, failed to induce the admiral to forego his visit to the court. With his own hand Charles wrote a letter to *son bon compère*, entreating him to come to him and by his counsels to infuse vigour into the administration. The king, moreover, despatched a warrant empowering Coligny to enrol a body-guard of fifty men-at-arms, in case he conceived

his life to be endangered by the animosity of Monsieur. The duc de Guise, by the express order of Charles, quitted the court and retired to Nanteuil; the cardinal de Lorraine was despatched on a mission to Rome; while, to demonstrate his regard for the admiral, the king honoured the maréchal de Montmorency with a visit of a few days at Chantilly—a proceeding the more significant, as the marshal was suspected by the queen-mother of covertly favouring heresy. In the court circle the irony of Charles's tone, and the menace of his manner towards Monsieur, created wonder and consternation; even Catherine herself quailed under the eye of her son. Frequent, meantime, were the written communications between Charles and the admiral respecting the proposed war in the Low Countries to aid the Flemish Protestants in their struggle against Philip II. and his lieutenant the duke of Alba. To re-establish the prince of Orange and his brothers in their forfeited estates and dignities, and to emancipate Flanders from the yoke of Spain, by means of an alliance between the crowns of France and England and the armed interposition of these powers, was the project which kindled the chivalrous ardour of the admiral. Charles declared himself disposed for a rupture with Spain; against which country he had, his majesty averred, many notable causes of complaint. To sound still further the sincerity of the royal professions on this and other matters, Coligny, before his departure from La Rochelle, despatched comte Louis de Nassau to confer secretly with the king. The interview took place at Fontenay-en-Brie.

The king repaired to Fontenay to meet the count, whose journey was conducted with the greatest mystery, the better to conceal this interview from the Spanish ambassador. The details of the proposed campaign were unfolded by the count of Nassau, who

assured his majesty that the principal cities of Flanders waited but the approach of the flag of France to pass from under the dominion of Spain to his own. Charles listened with evident approbation; he overwhelmed the count with favours, and restored to him the castle of Orange, in Provence, which had hitherto been garrisoned by French troops. He declared his intention of marrying his sister Marguerite to the prince of Béarn; adding, that he had come to the resolution of emancipating himself from the tyranny of the queen his mother, and of M. d'Anjou.[1] The report of this interview completely confirmed Coligny in his opinion of the king's sincerity. In his zeal to promote the reconciliation of factions, and to advance the noble cause of religious toleration, Coligny forgot the instability of Charles's character. Neither did he perceive that, though the king resented the assumptions of Monsieur and the control of his mother with petulant fury and by secret cabals, yet the very caution which Charles displayed in circumventing their designs was a proof of weakness; and an evidence of the moral power wielded by the queen-mother whenever she chose to exercise her influence. Despite the apparent willingness manifested by the king to renew his alliance with the queen of England and the Protestant princes of Germany, the queen of Navarre and other Huguenot chieftains attached no belief to these professions. By them it was deemed chimerical to expect that, out of regard for the desires of the admiral and of those individuals whom it was the fashion at court to term *les vaincus de Jarnac et de Moncontour*, the ancient alliance between the crowns of France and Spain would be broken; or that the orthodox government of Charles IX. should seek to involve the Catholic king in calamities which had exhausted their own country.

[1] Mezeray. Tavannes. La Place: Commentaires.

"Is it probable, think you, monseigneur, that this realm, destitute of soldiers, impoverished in finances, will for a light cause array itself against a kingdom flourishing like that of Spain, powerful, enriched by the gold of the Indies and the vigour infused by the long absence of war?" asked the queen of Navarre, when earnestly expostulating with Coligny on the danger likely to result to himself and the cause from his confidence in the promises of the king. "Madame," responded the admiral, "I firmly confide in the honour and in the word of my king: otherwise, life is no life to exist in the midst of perpetual alarms. Madame, I would rather die smitten by one effectual blow, than live a hundred years subject to dread apprehensions!"[1]

Thus resolved, Coligny repaired to Blois. Throwing himself on his knees before the king, the admiral besought his majesty's pardon for the past. Charles raised and affectionately embraced him, assuring *son bon père* that he was welcome. The same day the king restored to Coligny his seat in the council, and presented him with the sum of 100,000 crowns. "Never, mon père, have I experienced a more agreeable day than this one which restores you to me, and inaugurates a new era of peace throughout my realm," exclaimed the king. Another day the king said, "We have you now, mon père, amongst us, nor shall you be able to escape at will!" Even Coligny was startled at the ominous significance of these words; the shadow, however, vanished before the warmth and frankness of Charles's manner. In all these professions Charles, it is to be believed, was sincere. In the energy of Coligny, and his undoubted talents, he hoped to find the minister and counsellor who should emancipate him from the control of Catherine and her partisans. Aware of the power which she possessed of rousing the unhallowed

[1] Bouchet: Hist. de la Maison de Coligny.

passions of Charles's soul, and of directing the surgings of his fury against her opponents, even though the hour before the king had deemed them his own trusty adherents, Catherine waited. Nothing could be farther from the designs of the queen-mother and Monsieur than to declare war against Spain, or to support the heretic faction in the Low Countries. The project, nevertheless, was perpetually discussed in the council after the arrival of Coligny. Catherine made use of this weapon to lure Jeanne d'Albret and her adherents, including Condé, to the court. She commented on the defiant attitude still maintained by the Calvinists; and declared that no foreign war could be undertaken while the king's rebellious subjects maintained arms and found countenance from the queen of Navarre and Condé.

Whilst his mother and the council leisurely discussed the project of the war, Charles, Coligny, Montmorency, Téligny, and others held private conferences, in which not only was the Flemish campaign agreed upon, but measures unknown to the queen-mother and Monsieur, were resolved for the immediate relief of the Netherlanders. The king entered with enthusiasm into the details of the campaign; he constantly and most emphatically declared his resolve to bestow his sister Marguerite on the prince of Béarn, and in favour of that alliance to extend his protection to the Huguenots of the realm. It has been conjectured by those who believe that the entire course of the king's actions at this period was a tissue of dissimulation, that Catherine was cognizant of these secret parleys, and sanctioned them the better to ensnare the Huguenot chieftains; whose hopes of pre-eminence at court were based on the downfall of the queen-mother and of her favourite son. It has consequently been pretended that the massacre of the Protestants had been long decided, the

time selected being the festivities which were to follow on the marriage between Henri and Marguerite. The meditated assassinations were to be achieved during a masque, in which the part given to the Calvinist chieftains was to have been the assault of a mimic fort, defended by the king, his brothers, de Tavannes, de Retz, and others, who were to repulse and deliberately shoot the assailants with arquebuses laden with bullets. An event happened meantime, on the departure of Coligny for a temporary sojourn at his castle of Châtillon, after his first reception at Blois, which has afforded boundless scope for needless conjecture and suspicion. Philibert le Voyer, sieur de Lignerolles, possessed at one period great influence over Monsieur, who had intrusted him with many private concerns and political projects. He was distinguished amongst the cavaliers of Henry's household by his gallant bearing, his superb attire, and the licence of his tongue. The influence possessed by Lignerolles over the duc d'Anjou was observed with displeasure by de Villequier[1] and the marquis du Guast, and together they formed a plot to ruin him in the opinion of his royal master. The wary conspirators, when their plan was matured, sought the presence of Monsieur, and laid before him the proofs of his favourite's alleged treachery; while at the same time they resigned their own offices in the household, under pretence that their honour forbad them to remain the witnesses of their master's betrayal. As the queen-mother, to whom the matter was referred, declared her belief of the charges alleged against de Lignerolles—which related to some love intrigue in which the latter was stated to have dishonourably supplanted Monsieur—the duc d'Anjou dismissed his favourite. He, moreover, refused to advance the inte-

[1] George Villequier, seigneur de la Guierche.

rests of Lignerolles; and even threatened to procure his dismissal from the royal body-guard. Beside himself with indignation, Lignerolles determined to be avenged; and having procured audience of the king through the influence, it is supposed, of Charles's former nurse Philippe Richarde, he, explaining the treatment which he had received from Monsieur, demanded redress and protection. Charles, overjoyed at such a fine opportunity to thwart his brother and to give public evidence of his disapprobation of Monsieur's proceedings, assured de Lignerolles of his protection, and took him into his own service as chamberlain-in-ordinary. Having achieved this triumph over his enemies, Lignerolles, instead of conciliating Monsieur by silence and respect, indulged in bitter invectives; and made no scruple of betraying to the king the confidential communications once imparted to him by the duke. Lignerolles, moreover, became a devoted adherent of the admiral, and supported his counsels, and especially in the matter of the campaign in Flanders. He even went further, and privately advised Charles to exile his mother and brother, whom Lignerolles declared to be the sole causes of the lamentable condition to which the country was reduced. The king one day, during a transport of passion, repeated these words to Catherine: "His majesty," says the maréchal de Tavannes, "not being equal to accomplish so great a design, repeated this counsel of Lignerolles to the queen-mother, who thereupon, in concert with her son, resolved his death." Accordingly, when the court removed to Bourgueil, after the departure of Coligny, on the first day of September, while the king was hunting, the comte de Mansfeldt and de Villequier, by the command of the queen and M. d'Anjou, fell upon the unfortunate de Lignerolles, and after a few angry words

—a quarrel purposely sought—they passed their swords through his body, and left him dead.[1] On the return of the king he was informed of what had happened. His fury was demonstrated by menacing threats against his mother and his brother; while the assassins, both being in the service of M. d'Anjou, were arrested in the royal ante-chamber and committed to the Conciergerie on a warrant signed by the king himself. Catherine, however, was too well initiated in the deplorable vacillations of her son's disposition greatly to heed this demonstration of wrath. She knew that within a few days, or even in a few hours, the storm which raged in Charles's bosom would be lulled and superseded by an indifference and lassitude of mind favourable to her own supremacy. The cruel murder of Lignerolles, however, found few apologists even among the partisans of the queen and Monsieur. The maréchal de Tavannes declared "that there could be no security if her majesty commanded the assassination of individuals at the very portals of her son's cabinet." The imperious will of the queen, nevertheless, triumphed; and de Tavannes was induced a few days after the event to accompany the prior of France, the king's illegitimate brother, when he went to petition for the pardon and liberation of the assassins, under the plea that de Lignerolles had fallen fairly in combat against the comte de Mansfeldt and Villequier. Such is doubtless the true recital of the death of de Lignerolles and the causes which occasioned the murder, despite the positive assertions of those who recognise in every momentous event which happened at the court of Charles IX. after the signing of the peace of 1570, a link of that pre-concerted chain of incidents which terminated in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's-day. Accordingly by such narrators

[1] Davila: Hist. des Guerres civiles de France, tome i. p. 260. Mém. de l'Etat de France sous Charles IX., tome i.

it is stated that the duc d'Anjou had confided to de Lignerolles, during the days of his favour, the particulars of the design to assassinate the Huguenot chieftains during the festivities subsequent on the marriage of the princess Marguerite with Henri de Navarre. One day de Lignerolles suddenly entering the king's chamber, after an audience granted by Charles to M. de Briquemaut a Huguenot chieftain, he found his majesty angrily pacing the apartment, and muttering imprecations on the audacity of the sectaries. With a laugh Lignerolles exhorted the king to have patience, and distantly alluded to the secret resolution taken to slay the Protestant leaders. The king fiercely demanded an explanation; and after satisfying himself by the admissions of Monsieur that Lignerolles did in fact possess knowledge of the design, his majesty caused him to be assassinated by Mansfeldt and de Villequier, his bitter enemies. "A death so sudden and ominous as that of de Lignerolles," says the learned d'Aubais,[1] "gave birth to innumerable rumours. The motives of the deed were examined, and many reasons assigned. Those persons who have stated that de Lignerolles was possessed of the secret of St. Bartholomew's-day, and that he had divulged it, reason on conjectures formed by the course of succeeding events. The massacre of St. Bartholomew was not a premeditated deed, but an event which occurred unexpectedly." Another reason assigned as the cause of the death of de Lignerolles is, that the duc d'Anjou discovered an intrigue between his handsome chamberlain and the queen-mother, which so exasperated the king, that, in accord with Monsieur, the destruction of the delinquent was determined! The improbability of this last supposition demonstrates how far contemporary chroniclers of the sixteenth century

[1] Pièces fugitives sur l'Histoire de France—Notes sur l'Histoire des Guerres Vénaissin, par Perussis, tome i. p. 304.

sometimes were from possessing accurate and positive ground for their assertions; and that the greater part have gravely recorded but the fleeting rumours of the day.

The following few months of the year 1570 were spent by Catherine and the duc d'Anjou in negotiation with the queen of Navarre to induce her to visit the court, for the ostensible purpose of achieving the marriage of her son with Marguerite de Valois. Coligny, discarding all distrust, and ridiculing the prudent reserve manifested by Jeanne d'Albret, urged her to repair without delay to Blois; and by her presence and influence to cement the good understanding existing between king Charles and his subjects of the reformed faith. "The king, madame, will smooth every obstacle, even that of religious prejudice. You have nothing to apprehend!" Again the admiral wrote concerning the Flemish campaign: "The king, madame, has so firmly set his mind on this enterprise, that every day it is delayed seems to him as ten years!" Great as were the admiral's military talents, his political discernment must have been limited indeed if he supposed that the overthrow of the power so long possessed by Catherine could be achieved by a few confidential conversations between himself and his sovereign. The attempt to supersede her influence, futile though it proved to be, earned for Coligny the deadly enmity of the queen; while the unguarded manner in which the admiral spoke of the duc d'Anjou, of his dissipations, and of the expediency of procuring for Monsieur a settlement out of the realm, exasperated the duke to a pitch of animosity the danger of which Coligny then assuredly did not realize. Young as Monsieur was, no impediment had hitherto been suffered to oppose either his designs or his elevation. The reputation of his sister Marguerite, the friendship of the duc

de Guise, and the life of de Lignerolles had all been sacrificed to promote the advancement, or to satiate the vengeance of Monsieur. Even the very crown of her son Charles IX. had been jeopardized by the queen to satisfy her fond partiality, by the elevation of the duc d'Anjou to the important office of lieutenant-general of the realm. The confidential intercourse between the queen-mother and her son Henry had suffered no decline; and through Catherine's good offices a specious reconciliation had been patched up between Monsieur and the duc de Guise, to balance, as it was hoped, the influence of the admiral in affairs of state.

The princess Marguerite, meantime, continued to give her brother Henry repeated indications that she had not forgotten or forgiven the treatment she had received at his hands. During the autumn of the year 1571 mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, the duke's mistress, was excluded from the receptions of the young queen Elizabeth, by absolute command of Charles on the suggestion of Marguerite, greatly to the mortification of Monsieur. Catherine's third son, the duc d'Alençon, meantime, having attained to manhood, took up his abode at court. The young prince at this season was distinguished for extreme beauty and almost feminine delicacy of feature; though subsequently the ravages of smallpox so disfigured his face that he gained the renown of being the ugliest prince in Christendom. The mind of the duc d'Alençon was false, insignificant, and contracted. Addicted to many of the vices which degraded the character of Monsieur, these misdeeds assumed a more repulsive aspect when divested of the specious gloss that Henry contrived to cast over his actions, however reprehensible. The duc d'Alençon was small in stature, and insinuating in manner. The very weakness of his disposition ren-

dered him perfidious; he knew not how to repulse a flatterer, nor to silence the base counsel of those who, while they held the meanness of his capacity in derision, yet used his name to forward their schemes. The duc d'Alençon alone of Catherine's children bestowed favour on the reformed tenets. The duke had wit enough to perceive that his recognition by the faction devoted to Coligny invested him with consideration at court, where otherwise he found himself eclipsed by the duc d'Anjou. Moreover, the beauty and wit of Marguerite de Valois exercised absolute power over the mind of the young duke. If Catherine de Medici had educated and trained "M. d'Anjou as her own from his childhood upwards," Marguerite had acquired, by the spell of her fascinations, a hold scarcely less complete over the actions of M. d'Alençon. Her aim, therefore, was to render irrevocable the alienation between the brothers which the recital of her wrongs evoked in the breast of the duc d'Alençon. During the autumn of the year 1571, the duc d'Alençon, by the advice of his sister, placed himself at the head of the faction just then organizing at court, and termed "Les Politiques." The principal members of the faction were the maréchals de Cossé and de Montmorency, Biron and d'Entragues. The objects of the associates were—the reformation of the government independently of religious factions and partialities; the reconciliation of the houses of Guise and Châtillon, without which it was justly deemed impossible to re-establish concord; and the expulsion of all foreigners from the realm—under which category were comprehended the mercenary troops in the pay of the Huguenots and of king Charles; and Catherine's Italian protégés, Gondy, Birague, Strozzi, and others. The divisions and dissensions of the court of Charles IX. had now reached their climax. The princes of the royal family plotted each to compass the

overthrow of the other: the king hesitated, bewildered by his own fierce passions, and though striving to judge righteously, lived perpetually deceived and thwarted. Monsieur, amiable to all, and sincere to no one, pursued what he conceived to be his interests with reckless determination, believing that the annihilation of the great Huguenot heresy must be the foundation of his future prosperity. Coligny, unconciliatory, imprudent, and even treasonable in his deportment towards his sovereign, whom he had dared to threaten with renewed civil commotion in case war with Spain were refused, committed, moreover, the egregious folly of accepting with implicit confidence the professions of those whom his taunts outraged. The duc d'Alençon, his sister Marguerite, and their colleagues, though the principles they advocated were at this season lost amid the conflict of opinion prevailing at court, yet their hostility augmented the disquietude felt by Monsieur. To the queen-mother, meantime, these divisions were the portents of future power.

The condition, nevertheless, of parties, but, above all, the rivalry between her two elder sons, which became daily more perceptible, filled the mind of Catherine with forebodings. In degree as Charles favoured the admiral and his partisans—and therefore indirectly pledged himself to adopt more tolerant principles of government—so had the popularity of the duc d'Anjou augmented with the clergy of the Gallican church, and with the ultra-orthodox subjects of the realm. The very anticipation of the disasters which must necessarily ensue, should a contest arise between the king and his brother, occasioned the queen serious disquietude; and more than ever Catherine felt the expediency of providing for her beloved son a retreat from the kingdom alike honourable and advantageous, to avert a graver calamity. The queen of England, on being informed of the profligate

habits of M. d'Anjou, and of the flippant speeches with which he repaid her reception of his suit, had indignantly declined further negotiation for the alliance. Elizabeth so deeply resented the sarcasms of Monsieur as to observe to Montgomery, who was then living in exile at the English court: "That so long as king Charles reigned over France she would continue his good friend and ally; but that, should he happen to decease, she would employ all means in her power to wage a fearful war against France, did the issue even cost her crown; as she hated Monsieur, who would then be king, because he had presumed to use slanderous expressions most injurious to her honour."[1] "The queen-mother," says the historian Mathieu,[2] "in her anxiety to provide a retreat for M. d'Anjou, as the realm of France admits of no division, sought other kingdoms worthy of his acceptance. The state of Macedonia was deemed by her majesty one too limited for this young Alexander,[3] whom she cherished with tender preference. His words, his thoughts, and his dreams, nevertheless, related but to sceptres, crowns, and kingdoms. Not having succeeded in marrying him to the queen of England, her majesty contemplated at one time the reconstruction of the kingdom of Carthage, or to create Monsieur king of Algiers; but foreseeing in this project more trouble and labour than profit or glory, the queen at length was induced to fix her eyes on the realm of Poland." Sigismund Augustus II., the last sovereign of the valiant race of Jagellon, lay at this period stricken by a disorder from which his physicians gave him no hope of recovery. The crown of Poland

[1] Lettre et Sommaire de Paul de Foix, Ambassadeur de France en Angleterre—Le Laboureur: Additions and Mémoires de Michel Castelnau.

[2] Hist. de Charles IX.

[3] The duc d'Anjou's baptismal names were Edward Alexander, which he exchanged at his confirmation for the appellation of Henri.

being elective, and there being no male candidate of the lineage of Jagellon, which had already given seven kings to Poland, the throne about to be vacant became an object of speculation and envy to the cadets of the chief royal houses of Europe. By the counsel of Montluc, bishop of Valence, Catherine resolved to take measures to secure the election for her son d'Anjou. Her design, if attended with success, would separate the royal brothers, and also, as Catherine hoped, accomplish in part the prediction which ever haunted her—that each of her sons should in turn wear a crown. Charles applauded the project, dryly remarking: "That it would be a pity indeed if so accomplished and handsome a 'fellow' as his brother d'Anjou had not a crown." By command of his majesty every resource likely to facilitate the proposed negotiation was placed at the disposal of the queen-mother; and with such alacrity was the measure entered upon, that almost before he was aware of the fact, Monsieur found himself a candidate for the Polish crown. In vain the duke protested that he had no ambition for royal honours, and implored that he might not be exiled from France. The luxurious pleasures, the fair women, and the pomp of the French court were allurements for which nothing in the realm proposed could compensate. Coligny and the Huguenot party, glad to be delivered from the supercilious comments of Monsieur, joined in applauding the scheme. The duke once exiled from the court, king Charles, they augured, would the more easily be induced to change the policy which had directed the operations of the French cabinet during the preceding quarter of a century; and instead of union with Spain, his majesty would draw together the bonds of amity anciently subsisting between the crowns of England and France—an alliance in which the princes of the German Protestant League might participate. This union consolidated, the

overthrow of the Spanish power in the Low Countries was predicted, with the consequent toleration of the reformed faith throughout the principal realms of Europe. "Sire," said the admiral, "you will never do any good and prosperous thing until M. d'Anjou leaves your realm. Monsieur may as well give your majesty a positive refusal to quit the kingdom, if, as I have heard, after rejecting the crown matrimonial of England, he declines the elective diadem of Poland!" The king, however, required no incentive to induce him to insist on the immediate adoption of the requisite measures for promoting the election of Monsieur. Nothing could efface from the mind of Charles the impression that his brother was speculating on his infirm health, which would open to him the succession to the crown of France. Another cause which redoubled the anxious desire of king Charles for the absence of Monsieur, was the pregnancy of his young queen. Remembering the tumults and dangers of his own minority, Charles shuddered when he contemplated the possibility that the duc d'Anjou, in case any accident happened to himself, might claim and possess himself of the regency. It was determined, therefore, forthwith to despatch ambassadors into Poland to prepare the way; and by proclaiming the merits of the duke to enlist the sympathy of the principal nobles of the realm, when the throne which was still occupied by king Sigismund should become vacant.

Catherine in her selection of ambassadors displayed her accustomed sagacity. The bishop of Valence, to whom she intrusted the direction of the negotiation, was a prelate as renowned for tolerant principles as for eloquence and learning. This nomination, therefore, Catherine divined would be acceptable and deemed an omen of happy import by the powerful party in Poland that espoused the reformed ritual, and which comprehended several of the most influential palatines.

Montluc, however, sagely deemed it inexpedient to proceed personally on his mission until after the decease of Sigismund. He therefore recommended that his illegitimate son, the sieur de Balagny, should be despatched into Poland to observe the disposition of parties, and to make faithful report to the French council. Balagny inherited the brilliant talents of his father; and had distinguished himself in classical learning and rhetoric at the university of Padua. He, moreover, was able to pronounce an harangue in the Latin tongue; a facility which eventually gave the French ambassadors an important advantage over their competitors. Jean Choisnin was appointed secretary to Balagny; and together these two envoys, with a dexterity and foresight it is impossible sufficiently to eulogize, established secret relations with the Polish palatines; and set afloat the intrigues which, developed subsequently by the diplomatic ability of the bishop of Valence, placed the sceptre of Poland in the unwilling grasp of Henri de Valois.

CHAPTER III.

1571—1572.

Marriage between Marguerite de Valois and the prince of Navarre resolved—Visit of cardinal Alexandrini to Blois—Arrival there of the queen of Navarre—Views of the queen-mother and M. d'Anjou—Demeanour of the king—Death of Jeanne d'Albret—Arrogant deportment of Coligny—He insists on a declaration of war against Spain—Capture of Mons and Valenciennes—Harangue of M. d'Anjou—Political designs of the admiral—Hatred between king Charles and his brother—Arrival of the king of Navarre in Paris—He is received by Monsieur—Papal dispensation for the marriage between Henry and Marguerite—Its suspected authenticity—Measures of queen Catherine—Madame de Sauve—The queen confers with the duc de Guise—The duchess of Lorraine—Interview between Catherine and Charles IX. at Montpipeau—Its result—Departure of the king for Monceaux—Reconciliation between the king and the duc d'Anjou—Death of Coligny resolved by the queen—Details—Statement of the duc d'Anjou relative to the proposed assassination of the amiral de Coligny.

Before the close of the year 1571, the importunity of the French court and the remonstrances of Coligny wrung from the queen of Navarre a reluctant assent to the espousals of Marguerite de Valois and Henri de Navarre. The princess herself made no overt resistance to the alliance; the gallant qualities of the young prince de Béarn, and above all the reputation which he had already acquired for chivalrous bearing, determined Marguerite passively to accept the welcome emancipation from the control of her mother and her brother d'Anjou which this marriage opened. The king, moreover, had expressed his irrevocable resolve that, "let

what might happen, the alliance should be accomplished." Marguerite, therefore, contented herself with requesting the king her brother and the queen-mother to remember "that she was devoted to her faith; and that it would be a source of great disquietude for her to be compelled to espouse a prince who professed not the Catholic religion."[1] To madame de Retz, to madame de Nevers,[2] and to the duchesse de Montpensier[3] sister of the duc de Guise, Marguerite's intimate friends, the princess, nevertheless, bewailed the violence done to her inclinations; and the arbitrary manner in which the king had disposed of her hand, without regard to her own wishes. She even went so far as to declare "that she could never resign herself willingly to the loss of the duc de Guise, to whom she had given her affection and her faith; neither would she of her own free will accept for a husband the duke's greatest enemy."[4]

At the commencement of the month of December Coligny returned to Blois. He was received with every honour by the king, who went out some distance to meet him, under pretext of a hunting expedition. Catherine's reception of the admiral was cordial; and Marguerite gave him her brightest smiles as she inquired whether the arrival of her aunt the queen of Navarre would be long delayed? Coligny then repaired to the apartment of Monsieur, who, by the advice of the maréchal de Tavannes, kept the admiral waiting for an hour in the ante-chamber of his apartment before he admitted him to audience. The duke at this period

[1] Davila, tome i. liv. 24..

[2] Henriette de Cleves, sister of the duchesse de Guise, and of the princesse de Condé.

[3] Catherine Henriette de Lorraine, daughter of the great duc de Guise and Anne d'Esté.

[4] Davila. Brantôme. Marguerite termed the prince of Navarre, as chief of the Huguenots, the greatest enemy of the duc de Guise.

did all in his power to testify his extreme resentment against the Huguenots. "If any of the admiral's party addressed himself to M. d'Anjou," says a contemporary writer, "the latter repulsed him roughly, saying, 'that he was neither the friend nor the patron of heretics.'" If the close alliance which the king seemed inclined to contract with the reformed party of his realm occasioned Monsieur discomposure, the conduct of Charles was viewed with mingled surprise and displeasure by the Catholic princes of Europe. The king of Spain repeatedly addressed remonstrances to the French cabinet; to all of which the king returned evasive and even jocular responses. The pope alarmed, and violently opposed to the contemplated alliance between Marguerite and Henri de Navarre, despatched a legate, the cardinal Alexandrini, to Blois to remonstrate with the king; and to inform Charles that the Holy See would withhold the requisite dispensation for the celebration of so unholy a union; but that his holiness besought the king to bestow his sister on the king of Portugal, who was ready to renew his suit for her hand. The cardinal when on his road to Blois met the queen of Navarre, likewise on her way to join the court. The legate rudely traversed the queen's train, and passed close by her litter, without bestowing upon her the customary salute, deeming it "a crime and an impiety to offer greeting to an excommunicated person!"[1] On his arrival at Blois, the legate was admitted to immediate audience of the king. In reply to the expostulations of his holiness relative to the marriage of his sister, Charles replied "that, having other views for the princess, it was his resolve not to give her to the king of Portugal." The cardinal was fairly puzzled by the contradictions evinced in the demeanour of the king.

[1] Mém. de l'Etat de la France sous Charles IX., tome i. See Life of Jeanne d'Albret.

Charles treated the papal threats with disregard; he laughed, jested, menaced the duc d'Anjou, who now withdrew as much as possible from the royal presence, being at times in actual fear of his life, so intense was the king's exasperation. Sometimes Charles's caustic wit fell on Coligny and his Huguenots. The queen-mother, silent and observant, waited her hour of retaliation. To the parting exordium delivered by the legate, Charles is said to have replied in the ambiguous language in which he at this season delighted: "M. le cardinal, would to God that I might explain all to his holiness! You would then understand that there is nothing more conducive to establish religion and to exterminate the foes of the church than this marriage which you deprecate!"[1] Reassured by his farewell interviews with Catherine and Monsieur, the cardinal took his leave, very well content, it is stated, with the impression which he had produced.

At the end of February, 1572, the queen of Navarre, attended by a numerous retinue, including count Louis of Nassau, arrived at Blois. Jeanne was received with rapture by the king, who publicly addressed her in the presence of his mother, as "*sa bonne tante, son tout, sa mieux aymée!*" After the arrival of the queen of Navarre at Blois commenced the final contest for supremacy between Catherine and her son king Charles. The measures of the queen-mother were cautiously taken; the amount of her influence over the members of the council of state, and other of the chief nobles of the realm, had been accurately calculated. The more intently the numerous documents connected with this eventful period are studied, the more difficult is it to refuse belief to the fact that king Charles and the principal Huguenot chieftains were the personages who alone proceeded *in sincerity* to negotiate the mar-

[1] Mém. de l'Etat de la France, tome i.

riage between Marguerite and Henri de Navarre. The project was one abhorrent to the queen-mother and to Monsieur; who both, far from having eventually procured the signature of the marriage-contract by mingled cajolery and threats, were at this period inimical as the queen of Navarre herself to its completion. The marriage, unless expressly designed as a means to compass the massacre of the 24th of August —an hypothesis refuted by numerous documents emanating from the pen of both parties—was an event fraught with peril to the state, by giving an undue preponderance to its Calvinist subjects; and by embroiling France with her potent neighbour the king of Spain; "for," to quote the words of Elisabeth de Valois, written by command of her husband Philip II., "France being Huguenot, the heresy would soon spread to the Low Countries and into Spain; a thing, madame, not to be tolerated by this government."[1]

The incidents of the massacre refute the notion that it could have been preconcerted. That event, to be successfully executed, required a certain concurrence of circumstance which at this period neither Catherine nor her sons could calculate upon. It needed, in the first place, the certain knowledge that the prince of Navarre would appear in person at the French court to espouse the princess—a demand which the queen of Navarre and her council had constantly rejected—insisting that the marriage ceremony might be performed by proxy, and that the princess Marguerite should afterwards proceed to join her husband. The queen of Navarre visited the French court on the understanding that this stipulation was known and accepted by king Charles. Secondly, Catherine must have possessed a positive knowledge that the marriage

[1] See Life of Elisabeth de Valois, Queen of Spain, and the Court of Philip II., vol. i. p. 279.

of Henri and Marguerite, after it had been arranged according to the ritual and designs of the court, would be attended by the *élite* of the Huguenot chivalry; and that all these chieftains would rush blindly into the snare, including Coligny and the queen of Navarre. It seems, on the contrary, clearly proved that the queen and Monsieur were at this season overwhelmed with the aspect of events; which, if consummated, would have driven them from share in the government, and have thrown the king entirely into the power of the Huguenot faction. It was this discovery that eventually brought about that policy of reaction which ended in the destruction of Coligny; for the king, much as he abhorred the control of his mother, was not prepared utterly to repudiate the religion and the policy which for centuries had been traditional in the cabinet of successive monarchs of France.

The queen of Navarre, meantime, experienced no little annoyance at the unfaithful performance, on the part of the court, of the articles previously agreed upon between herself and Charles's ambassadors—articles upon the acceptance of which she had conditionally made the journey to Blois. The queen-mother, at her own subtle request, had been intrusted by king Charles with the negotiation of the marriage upon the understanding "that, let what might happen, the alliance was to be concluded." Catherine, being vehemently opposed to the alliance, craftily sought, by denying all that had been before conceded and by proposing in lieu conditions which she knew Jeanne could not accept, to throw the odium of a rupture on the queen of Navarre. The queen, therefore, demanded the mass for her daughter Marguerite, when resident in Béarn, though contrary to the direct stipulations made on the subject. She insisted that Henri and Marguerite should reside, during the greater portion of the year,

at the French court. "Mon fils," wrote the queen of Navarre to her son, "I am compelled to negotiate quite contrary to my expectations and to their promises. I have no longer liberty to speak to madame, but only to the queen-mother; *qui me traite à la fourche*. As for Monsieur, he attempts also to domineer over me, though in a very cautious manner, half in jest, and half by deceit, as you know."[1] The terrible eye of Charles IX., however, rested upon both the royal negotiators, subtle and specious as they deemed their diplomacy.

Incited by the counsels of the admiral, the king suddenly declared his resolve to place the negotiation in the hands of certain counsellors chosen from both parties. The queen of Navarre was, moreover, permitted to consult with three eminent ministers of her own persuasion; and to apply for advice to the ambassadors sent by the queen of England to assist at the conferences of Blois. Charles's pertinacity of purpose was not to be defeated: the commissioners, therefore, set diligently to work, and entered with the greatest apparent impartiality into the details of the marriage. The queen-mother, however, and Monsieur, through their adherents de Retz, Birague, and others, still intrigued, and insisted that the Romish worship should be permitted to Marguerite when in Béarn—a stipulation which they were aware was sufficient to put a stop altogether to the negotiation.[2] Marguerite herself behaved throughout the discussion with great prudence and caution; she offered most deferential attentions to the queen of Navarre; she promised to obey her brother the king in all matters save in those which affected her religious faith; while with Catherine and her brother d'Anjou the princess assumed the injured

[1] Life of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, vol. ii. p. 293.
[2] Ibid.

air of one whose inclinations had never been consulted; but added always, "that the will of the king must be obeyed." "Madame is beautiful and discreet," wrote Jeanne d'Albret to her son; "but she has been educated in the midst of the most vicious and corrupt court that can be conceived." "Madame Marguerite has paid me every honour and welcome in her power to bestow; and she has frankly owned to me the agreeable ideas which she has formed of you. With her beauty and wit she exercises great influence with the queen-mother and with the king, and with messieurs her younger brothers," wrote Jeanne at another season to the prince of Béarn. Wearied at length by these dissensions, and finding that the commissioners were as far as ever from attaining to a satisfactory arrangement, their discussions having lasted throughout the month of March, Charles suddenly declared his resolution to give his sister Marguerite to Henri de Navarre without any stipulation whatever, provided that Henri would come himself to the court to receive the hand of the princess. Nothing could exceed the dismay of the hostile factions. The king's proposition could not be rejected; its apparent generosity and magnanimity disarmed comment or censure; while Coligny, from his retreat at Châtillon, proclaimed it the crowning point of their sovereign's clement sagacity. Catherine in vain sought to oppose obstacles; but succeeded only in raising a bitter discussion on the ceremonies to be observed at the proposed espousals of her daughter. Monsieur, though profuse and grand in his congratulations, beheld with feelings of indescribable anger the unexpected defeat of his mother's policy. Jeanne d'Albret, with a sorrowful heart and sad forebodings, found herself compelled to assent to an alliance she had from the first sought to evade; while Charles, in exultation, despatched a courier to Rome to demand the necessary dispensation for the marriage from the

supreme pontiff. The demand was refused by Pius V. "Sooner than grant dispensation of marriage to a heretic, I would lose my head," exclaimed the pope indignantly, in reply to the solicitations of the cardinal de Lorraine. The king flew into one of his paroxysms of fury when informed of the pontiff's refusal. On taking leave of the queen of Navarre, who, nevertheless, departed from Blois for Paris, to make suitable preparations for the marriage, Charles reiterated his determination to give his sister to "son bon Henri;" adding, with ribald irony, "*Ma tante!* if M. le pape demeans himself too absurdly in this affair, I promise you that I will take Margot by the hand, and lead her to be married in full *prêche!*"[1]

A few days after her arrival in Paris, however, queen Jeanne fell ill. Worn out by labours of unparalleled magnitude, and by the mental anxiety of the past months, the queen of Navarre expired on Monday, June 9th, 1572, the immediate cause of her death being the bursting of an abscess on the lungs. The greatest agitation prevailed amongst the members of the great Huguenot party. It was rumoured that the queen of Navarre had died of poison, administered by command of the queen-mother by Rêné, her Italian perfumer, who had sold scented gloves and other gauds to Jeanne d'Albret.* By others the crime was imputed to the duc d'Anjou, who, it was said, had caused poison to be mingled in a cup of wine at a banquet given by him when the queen was at Blois. The panic occasioned by these rumours was, however, allayed by the prompt measures taken by the king; who commanded a *post-mortem* examination of the remains of the deceased queen to be made by his own surgeon-in-chief, in the presence of Jeanne's physicians-in-ordinary Caillard and Desnœux; and their report sufficiently established the

[1] Etoile: Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de France.

causes of the decease of the queen of Navarre.[1] The admiral, moreover, expressed the most perfect confidence in the integrity of the court; and treated the rumours current relative to the decease of his late benefactress as scandalous slanders, propagated to destroy the confidence now happily existing between Roman Catholics and Huguenots.

The decease of Jeanne d'Albret suspended for an interval the marriage of the princess Marguerite and the young king of Navarre. This delay wrought the ruin of the Huguenot chieftains. Intoxicated by his success, the arrogance of Coligny and his assumptions of authority perfected the measure of opposition and disgust in Charles's cabinet which the example of Catherine had failed to elicit. On the strength of some hasty words uttered by Charles at Blois, Louis of Nassau, with the sanction of Coligny alone, gathered together a body of troops and boldly invaded the Spanish territories by seizing the town of Mons in Hainault; while the great Huguenot chieftain la Noue surprised Valenciennes.[2] The consternation of the council of state was intense; for so unexpected and unauthorized a proceeding defied precedent. The dismay was not abated when the Spanish ambassador demanded his passports and proceeded to make preparation to leave the kingdom. The Huguenots in Paris, meanwhile, assailed the king with threats of an immediate insurrection if the valiant exploit of Nassau was disowned. "Sire! guerre espagnole ou civile!" was the audacious cry that greeted the ear of Charles. The political crisis which the rash capture of Mons occasioned, restored to Catherine a portion of her lost influence. The

[1] Life of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, vol. ii.

[2] Mezeray—Grande Histoire. De Thou. Mém. de Tavannes. Mathieu. Dupleix. Cayet. Hist. de l'Etat de France sous Charles IX.

king had recourse to the tried ability of his mother in order to pacify the Spanish ambassador, and to ward from his realm immediate reprisals from Philip II. The queen first commissioned the maréchal de Tavannes to visit the ambassador, and to make it her special request that he would not quit the realm, as no contravention of treaties was contemplated by his Christian majesty. She next despatched a gentleman of her household to Flanders, the bearer of a missive to the duke of Alba, in which the queen assured him "that war would not be declared by France against Spain, let whoever asserted the contrary." The queen then assembled the council of state, at which her majesty presided, sitting under the canopy at the right hand of the king. The duc d'Anjou then pronounced an eloquent harangue, deprecating the war. He represented the exhausted condition of the finances. "Sire," said the duke, "you know the wealth of Spain, and the terror ever inspired by her arms; see whether your majesty is now in condition to combat both! Your majesty has recently perused the grievances laid before you by the governors of Champagne, Picardy, Guienne, and Languedoc; throughout your realm there is not one town able to withstand a siege. Your people, sire, are oppressed with misery occasioned by the late civil war, and by the present dearth of provisions; so that your majesty may not implicitly rely on their loyal co-operation. Considering these grave contingencies, sire, it is my humble opinion that you ought not to violate past treaties and convert your present friends into bitter foes without a certainty that your realm can support you throughout every consequence of so bold a defiance."[1] De Tavannes next rose, and in a forcible and pithy address pointed out to the king the folly of

[1] Mém. de Messire Gaspard de Tavannes, Maréchal de France.—De Thou. Mezeray.

plunging into a war with Spain to content the admiral and his partisans, whose selfish motive in proffering such counsel was palpable. Coligny vehemently contradicted the statements of the preceding orators; his caustic irony spared not the queen-mother nor Monsieur, though they confronted him at the council board. Finally, he concluded his oration on the benefit to result from a Spanish war in these ominous words, on the literal sense of which his enemies were soon prepared to act. Alluding to the bands of dissolute soldiery in the pay of the Huguenot chieftains dispersed over the country, Coligny said: "Sire, in order to purge the realm from so much bad blood, at once superfluous and dangerous, and which may engender some new malady in the body of your kingdom, a copious bleeding is requisite. At any rate your majesty will find yourself under obligation to puncture a vein!"[1] Irresolute, doubtful of his mother's intentions, and knowing that she would counteract any warlike measure to the utmost, Charles retired from the council.

The most zealous upholders of Coligny cannot but admit that the admiral's conduct at this season was impolitic and rash to a degree which would have authorized stringent proceedings on the part of the sovereign. In the eyes of all good subjects and loyal Catholics, Coligny—despite the recent amnesty extorted by the successes of the Huguenot arms—stood in the light of an attainted traitor, amenable to the pains and penalties decreed against him in 1568 by edict of the parliament of Paris, and ratified by the subsequent sign-manual of the king. Whatever might have been the alleged pretext and excuse for the repeated appeals to arms of Coligny, Condé, and others, these their state-

[1] La Popelinière, tome ii. liv. 27. Discours au Roy pour la Guerre contre les Espagnols en Pays-Bas. Mém. de Duplessis Mornay.

ments and apologies had not been accepted or deemed valid by the great majority of their countrymen. Thrice had the admiral risen against his sovereign. Upon four occasions had he called in the aid of foreign monarchs. Seven times had Coligny enlisted bands of German mercenaries to ravage his country; besides fighting six pitched battles against the troops of his sovereign. The treaties of alliance which the admiral had signed with Elizabeth of England, the king of Sweden, and with most of the Protestant princes of Germany, were documents universally notorious. In these conventions, articles injurious to the safety of the Catholic realm of France had been agreed upon; the government and person of the sovereign were alluded to in terms of gross disrespect; while the admiral and his partisans bound themselves to wage perpetual war until full liberty had been conceded throughout the realm for the public exercise of the reformed faith. In France, therefore, at this period, Coligny and his adherents stood convicted of treason to the sovereign and of disloyalty to the great majority of their countrymen, arbiters of the contest between the reformed party and the crown. The members of the parliaments of the realm, the judges, the great officers of state, the royal family, and the people generally held to communion with the Romish church; they deprecated toleration in religious matters; and applauded and aided the sovereign by donations and bodily service, to put down the faction whose efforts to establish their religion, and to obtain admission into the body politic, perpetually convulsed the state. Moreover, it was surmised that Coligny's ardour for his faith was rendered the more keen by his political and hereditary feuds. His unbridled animosity towards the princes of Lorraine-Guise became in great measure the source and cause of the vacillation and insincerity of the queen-mother—for

cunning is the chief weapon of the weak. The character of the admiral, in the opinion of his contemporaries, never recovered from the stain of his having been privy to the assassination of the duc de Guise. If, in reality, the admiral had been endowed with that chivalrous probity and unsullied honour with which he has been invested, he ought to have repulsed the suspicion of so atrocious a deed with the indignant energy which his position and repute as a Christian man and a cavalier demanded. But what was Coligny's conduct at this juncture in repelling the suspicion—the source of the future misfortunes which befel him—when, as a loyal subject and a valiant knight, France eagerly awaited his vindication from the charge? In reply to the memorials presented by the princes of Guise to king Charles, to Catherine, to the parliaments of Paris, Bordeaux, and Toulouse—memorials which were dispersed not alone over the realm, but throughout neighbouring states, and in which the admiral was plainly accused of connivance in the foul assassination—Coligny addressed three letters to Catherine de Medici, and published two memorials, in which not only does he not deny categorically the charges preferred against him, but unblushingly proceeds to prove that, whoever might have been the instigator of the crime, he deserved well from God and the king.[1] "Think not, madame," writes the

[1] These three letters and the memorials are now before the author. Coligny therein makes the following admissions. The admiral admits that during five or six months he had heard persons talk in his presence of the contemplated assassination, *et qu'il ne la pas fort contesté* because he had been informed that assassins had been hired to kill himself. That Poltrot (the duke's assassin) had said in his presence, that it would be easy to slay the duc de Guise, to which language "the said admiral had then replied nothing, nor said he anything in favour of, or in deprecation of the deed." He, moreover, admits that he was aware of the assassin's design in visiting the camp of the duke before Orléans; and that, after possessing this knowledge, he had presented Poltrot with one hundred crowns to buy a fleet horse. In the third memorial the ad-

admiral, in one of these memorials which he called "his vindication," "that the words which I utter in self-defence are said out of regret for M. de Guise, for I esteem that event as one which cannot be surpassed by fortune for the good of the kingdom and the church of God; *and most especially is it beneficial for myself, and for all my house!*" Such admissions, and such re-affirmation of Coligny's feelings towards a prince who once had been his bosom friend, tended not to quench the animosity of the duc de Guise for one whom he could scarcely avoid regarding as the murderer of his father.

The project, moreover, of the war with Spain, so pertinaciously urged upon Charles IX., at a season when the kingdom was rent by factions and impoverished by civil contests, deserves little commendation. Philip II. throughout the civil contests had been the ally of Charles IX.; his armies and his treasures had been offered to rescue the crown of the Valois from the perils of sedition; and though it might be true that Spanish diplomacy had been unfaithful, selfish, and intriguing, and, as far as the internal affairs of France were concerned, had wrested unfair advantages from the perplexities of the government, yet the present was not the time to bring down upon France the legions of the most potent monarch of Christendom.

The admiral, nevertheless, continued to press this unwelcome campaign upon the king, heedless of the

miral declared that the death of Guise was the greatest benefit and prosperity which could have happened to the kingdom, to the church, the king, and the house of Coligny. The admiral protests against his cause being judged by the parliaments of the realm, and demands that it may be decided by arms. Finally, Coligny condescends to claim the benefit of the act of amnesty, conceded by the edict of pacification, 1563, to exonerate him from any penalties to which his real participation in the crime, or his alleged connivance therein, may have rendered him liable.

remonstrances of Montgomery, of the bishop of Valence, and others more prudent than himself. In his eagerness to enforce its adoption, the admiral insensibly betrayed the magnitude of the military resources and the extensive organization of the Huguenot party throughout the realm. Charles listened in consternation: at one time yielding to his feelings of hatred against Monsieur, and chafing at the control of his mother, he debated whether he should not throw himself into the arms of the admiral and his party, and by making common cause with them thus effect his enfranchisement. But Coligny in his ardour had not contemplated the effect likely to be produced by the reverse of his picture, when the temerity of the subject who had presumed to offer succour and protection to his sovereign should be represented to the king. "Sire!" exclaimed the admiral one day, in reply to an observation made by Charles on the disorganized condition of the royal army, "Sire, I offer to your majesty ten thousand men, valiant and true, to commence this said war in Flanders!" The king afterwards repeated the offer to the maréchal de Tavannes, without, however, naming Coligny as its author. De Tavannes replied, "That subject, your majesty, who has dared to make such an offer ought to suffer decapitation! How, sire, has this audacious subject dared to offer to you that which ought already to be yours! It is clear that he has made himself chieftain of a faction to your notable prejudice; he has disloyally lured from you those your liege subjects to turn their arms in case of need against your majesty's royal person!"[1] Restless and disquieted, Charles deliberated; but Coligny, by arousing the fears of the sovereign against his nearest kindred, and by reducing Catherine and her party to desperation

[1] Mém. de Gaspard de Tavannes. Mém. de l'Etat de France sous Charles IX., tome i. p. 176.

without possessing previously a certainty of ultimately effecting their overthrow, proved himself shortsighted as a politician, and deficient in that mature judgment by which great enterprises are alone achieved.

The French, under count Louis of Nassau, had no sooner entrenched themselves in Mons, than the town was invested by the duke of Alba, who recaptured Valenciennes, and drove out la Noue. Coligny, acting as if the crown of France rested on his head, despatched the sieur de Genlis with a body of three thousand Huguenots to relieve Mons. This body of troops, however, was intercepted by the Spanish army, and completely put to the rout with great slaughter.[1] The admiral, nothing daunted, ascribed this defeat to the irresolutions of the government in delaying to make formal proclamation of war; and with the permission of the king, whom this rout had greatly infuriated, he caused another levy of three thousand men, under Villars, to be sent to the frontier. The marshal Strozzi, meantime, was despatched to take the command of a *corps* of eight thousand men stationed in the vicinity of Bordeaux; from whence, in pursuance of the design of the admiral, they were to embark for Flanders. The command was given to Strozzi by the king, at the persuasion of Coligny, in order to propitiate Catherine; and a variety of rumours were purposely propagated as to the future destination of this force. The influence of the admiral seemed now paramount; for a season usurping the *rôle* of the queen-mother, he ruled his sovereign with that sway which a will firm and concentrated must ever exercise over a feeble yet wayward mind.

The news of the defeat of Genlis reached Paris about the middle of July, 1572. On the day but one following, a council was again holden in the Louvre to deli-

[1] Mezeray: Vie de Charles IX.

berate on the ominous fact that the Spanish ambassador had again threatened to quit Paris, unless the expedition of Strozzi was countermanded, and the troops under Villars withdrawn from the Flemish frontier. A hot debate ensued on the project of the war, in which Monsieur took part, it is recorded, with great ability. The excitement of Coligny was intense; during the course of a fervid oration the admiral imprudently exclaimed: "If your majesty does not assent to the campaign in Flanders, you may be assured we will fight it on your own territory here in France. I can no longer restrain the military ardour of my partisans; so that, sire, we must have either a Spanish war or a civil contest."[1] The council separated without coming to any definite decision; but the war and the expediency of sending the Spanish ambassador Alava his passports continued to be privately discussed by Charles and the admiral. His majesty further took into his confidence the maréchal de Montmorency, his brother the duc d'Alençon, and Téligny, son-in-law of the admiral. The secretary of state, Simon de Fizes,[2] was also initiated into the proposed measures, an oath of secresy being exacted from each of these personages. The demeanour of Charles towards Monsieur during these transactions became more and more threatening. One day the duke entered the king's cabinet to pay his respects to his majesty, after having exchanged some words with the admiral, whom he met in the antechamber. Monsieur found the king in a state of violent excitement. Charles, as soon as he perceived his brother, put his hand upon his dagger, which he half drew from its sheath, fixing upon Monsieur a glance so full of

[1] Mémoires de Gaspard de Tavannes. L'amiral disoit: "Qu'il ne pouvait plus tenir ses partisans; et qu'il falloit une des guerres espagnole ou civile!"—Tavannes.

[2] Baron de Sauve, secretary of state. M. de Sauve died 1579.

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loathing and menace that the latter hastily retreated, fearing for his life.[1] The eye of Catherine de Medici rested, however, upon her son: she relied upon the power which she had before so successfully exercised of bending that fitful and stormy spirit to her will; and she prepared to put forth those fascinations of manner and words, mingled with that maternal authority which enabled her during the reigns of her sons to wield the sceptre of France as despotically as if by her own hereditary right.

The young king of Navarre, meantime, arrived in Paris attended by a suite of eight hundred of the élite of the Huguenot chivalry. Henri's reluctance to conclude his alliance with Marguerite, or to repair to Paris, had been overcome by the counsels and solicitations of the admiral, who repeatedly wrote letters to implore Henri to hasten to the capital. Finally, Coligny despatched two noted Huguenot ministers, Merlin de Vaulx and Espina, whose secret communications and exhortations had at length induced the king of Navarre to set out.

Henri and his cavaliers were received with great pomp by the municipal authorities of Paris. At the gate of the town the duc d'Anjou, attended by four marshals of France and a great train of courtiers, welcomed his future brother-in-law. In the fauxbourg Henri was greeted by the duc d'Alençon, who was accompanied by the ducs de Guise, de Nevers, and de Montmorency, and by four hundred of the courtiers. The streets were lined with guards; and the most magnificent decorations adorned the houses and public edifices, while inscriptions abounded conveying a hearty greeting from the inhabitants of Paris to the son of Jeanne d'Albret. The king of Navarre and his cava-

[1] Relation de Henri III. sur les Motifs de la Journée de St. Barthélemy.—MS. Bibl. Imp.—Dupuy.

liers were arrayed in mourning cloaks, and their horses were caparisoned with housings of black cloth.[1] As this mournful cavalcade passed through the streets of the capital the spectators cheered the young prince with hearty enthusiasm. The frank and manly face of Henri de Navarre was shadowed by no cloud of distrust; yet many felt an ominous foreboding as they watched the progress of that sombre procession to the portal of the Louvre.

The dispensation for the marriage of Henri with Marguerite de Valois had at length been ostensibly forwarded from Rome by the cardinal de Lorraine; and the ceremonial was fixed to take place at Notre Dame on the 18th of August. Great controversy exists relative to the authenticity of this document, so eagerly desired by Charles and vehemently refused by the Vatican. Proof, however, seems abundantly to exist that Charles, being resolved to accomplish the marriage between his sister and the king of Navarre, caused the dispensation to be forged; despairing of being able to vanquish the repugnance of the pope to the union which he was bent upon effecting. Charles first proposed the matter to Coligny, observing that he apprehended the rupture of the entire treaty from the animosity and obstinacy of the pope, who was guided by the counsels of the king of Spain. Coligny replied "that, provided the marriage were accomplished, all things would go well; and that the Huguenots could do without the sanction of a papal dispensation, which they deemed of no value whatever."[2] Charles upon this commanded the secretary of state, M. de Sauve, to address a fictitious letter to him, in the name of his ambassador in Rome, in which it was stated that the cardinal de Lorraine had

[1] Lettre d'un Particulier de Paris. Registres de l'Hôtel de Ville.—MS.

[2] Capi Lupi: Stratagème du Roy Charles IX.

at length, by dint of solicitation, wrung from Gregory XIII.[1] the requisite authorization for the marriage of the sister of his Christian majesty with the king of Navarre—a document which would be forwarded by the first courier; but meantime his holiness sanctioned the immediate solemnization of the marriage. The letter was presented to Catherine: at the same time the fraud was explained to her majesty by her son the king, who, however, told her that, as he had determined, in conjunction with Coligny, to adopt this measure in order to accomplish the much-delayed alliance, it was useless to offer either opposition or remonstrance. Catherine, therefore, who in reality felt alarm at the number and prowess of the Huguenots assembled in Paris, and knowing that the public ceremonial of the marriage would alone induce them to quit the capital, assented to the subterfuge suggested; and undertook to satisfy any scruples which the cardinal de Bourbon might feel at celebrating the marriage without a previous perusal of the papal dispensation. The illegality of such marriage, moreover, suited the ultimate designs of the queen. This version of the affair, related as it is by one of the most ardent apologists of the massacre of St. Batholomew's-day, appears nevertheless to be both true and authentic. No solicitations on behalf of the king could have induced the supreme pontiff to grant licence for the marriage of a Catholic princess with a heretic monarch, whose small realm lay under interdict, and whose mother had died unshriven and excommunicate. Neither, as it is shown by irrefragable evidence, was the plan of the massacre organized at this time, so that its details might have been imparted to the pope; nor even was it contemplated when application was made to the Holy See to procure the

[1] Gregoire Buonocompagno succeeded to the tiara on the decease of Pius V., 1572. Pope Gregory died in 1585, aged 85.

dispensation during the months of May and June, 1572. The folly perpetrated by the Huguenot chieftains and their adherents, in subsequently assembling in Paris, as they actually did, could never have been predicted, and still less relied upon. Nevertheless, without that improbable circumstance—the meeting together of the chief supporters of heresy, so that one net should envelop them *all*—the massacre, instead of consolidating the power of Catherine and the orthodox party, would have been the signal for so terrible a retaliation on the part of the Huguenots that the throne itself must have fallen. The recital of the Italian Capilupi and others, relative to the dispensation fabricated by Charles and the admiral, is moreover confirmed by a letter addressed by the cardinal de Lorraine to king Charles after the massacre, and dated September 10th; in which the prelate states that he had written to the queen-mother by the same courier "concerning the dispensation for your sister's marriage,"[1] when the public celebration of the espousals between Henry and Marguerite had been performed in Paris on the 18th of August. Eventually a true dispensation[2] was despatched from Rome, when the course of events had rendered such a step advisable;[3] and when the virtual abrogation of the articles of Marguerite's marriage-contract most offensive to the claims of the Romish church, and the refusal of the princess

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp., Dupuy, 209, 211, fol. 89.

[2] Le Roy envoya un gentilhomme pour faire entendre au pape que c'etoit là la guerre que sa saintété avoit tant soupçonnée qu'il voulait faire au roy d'Espagne. Aussi il luy demandait pardon d'une si grande faute qu'il avoit commise d'avoir fait faire le marriage de sa sœur sans sa bénédiction et dispense: mais que la necessité l'avoit reduit à cela, d'autant qu'il avoit été poussé d'un bon zèle, il avoit eu espérance d'obtenir pardon de luy.—Mém. de l'Etat de la France, tome i.

[3] After Marguerite had refused to be divorced from her husband on the plea suggested by the queen-mother.—See Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite, liv. i.

to assent to the project of a divorce from her newly espoused husband, rendered its concession expedient.

The cool self-possession of Catherine's manner at length roused misgivings in the breast of Coligny. Montluc, bishop of Valence—a prelate of consummate ability, and so great an adept in diplomacy that, in consideration of his acquirements, his heretical inclinations were overlooked—perpetually warned the admiral that his position was untenable, and counselled him to make overtures of reconciliation to the queen-mother. Such was likewise the counsel of several of the admiral's most attached adherents, including Francourt, chancellor to the deceased queen of Navarre, and others. The admiral, therefore, one day somewhat tardily advised the king to communicate to his royal mother the measures which in their secret conclaves they had decided upon against the realm of Spain, stating that he apprehended many difficulties in hiding the affair from her majesty. Charles replied, "You are totally misinformed, leave the matter to me. I perceive that you do not yet know my mother—she is the greatest mischief-maker on the face of the earth!" But the irritation of Catherine de Medici had now reached its culminating point, and in conjunction with the duc d'Anjou she was preparing to act. The position, moreover, of the kingdom was critical in the extreme. The Spanish ambassador waited but one more decisive act of hostility to quit the realm—a retreat which would have been followed by the advance of Alba on the French territory. The Huguenot population caballed, menaced, and assembled in formidable bodies at Fontainebleau and various other places; while the seditious cry of *Guerre espagnole ou guerre civile!* resounded through the streets of Paris, and echoed in the council-chamber of the Louvre. The contentions between Roman Catholic and Huguenot, moreover, had

given rise to countless feuds and political enmities of minor note. Meantime minutes of all the principal private conferences between Coligny and the king had been communicated to the queen by M. de Sauve, the secretary whom Charles had taken into his confidence, through his wife, who was one of Catherine's ladies. Madame de Sauve [1] was beautiful, *piquante*, and silly. Overawed by the queen, and flattered at the open admiration of her charms displayed by Monsieur, madame de Sauve implicitly obeyed the directions of her royal mistress. Through madame de Sauve, therefore, the duc d'Anjou learned that Charles was about to leave Paris to hunt over the domain attached to the château of Montpipeau, where he intended to remain sullenly aloof until the period appointed for the marriage of his sister Marguerite—a space of a few days only. Moreover, the duke ascertained that after this union had been accomplished secret instructions were to be instantly forwarded to Strozzi to embark at La Rochelle and effect a landing in Flanders in aid of the prince of Orange and his party. This intelligence was immediately communicated by Monsieur to the queen his mother; and in the mind of both it aroused the same feelings of alarm and dismay. Catherine felt that the time was arrived for her final struggle with the chiefs of the faction who had committed the fatal mistake of believing that by rousing the besetting foible of the king—an irritable jealousy of being ruled—they had secured his steady co-operation. The duc de Guise was first summoned to a private conference by the queen and Monsieur. It was then proposed by the

[1] Charlotte de Beaune. After the decease of M. de Sauve, in 1579, his widow married François de la Tremouille, marquis de Noirmoustier. During the life of her first husband Charlotte was distinguished at court by the appellation of "la belle madame de Sauve." She was grand-daughter of Semblancay, the unfortunate minister of Francis I.

duc d'Anjou to carry into effect the judicial sentence long ago pronounced by the parliament of Paris against Coligny, a decree which had never been revoked by a pardon under the great seal: to whit, that the admiral should suffer death for his treasonable revolts, with attainder and the consequent forfeiture of his possessions and dignities.[1] The arraignment of the admiral on the capital charge of his alleged connivance in the assassination of François duc de Guise having been repeatedly demanded by all the members of the house of Lorraine, the duc de Guise promised Catherine a hearty concurrence in her endeavours to destroy their common foe. For a time also Guise was content to forego his hatred of Monsieur in his desire to avenge that cruel assassination; for the impunity hitherto conceded to Coligny was deemed a reproach on the honour of the house of Lorraine. There was also a powerful and secret influence at work at this period against the admiral, which has been hitherto overlooked in the recital of the momentous events of this period. The young duchess of Lorraine, Claude de France, had arrived at the court soon after the entry of the king of Navarre into Paris. The murder of the duc de Guise had aroused in the bosom of Claude the fiercest thirst for the punishment of the assassins; and the vehement letter which the duchess wrote to her mother on the occasion is still preserved in the Bibliothèque Impériale.[2]

[1] Arrêt du parlement de Paris contre messire Gaspard de Coligny, seigneur de Châtillon. Decret de prise de corps. Journal de Brulart. Prononcé le 13 de Septembre, 1569, executé en effigie le même jour. "Le 13 du present moys Gaspard de Coligny, amiral de France, fut pendu en effigie en la place de Grève, suivant l'arrêt de la teneur suivante, etc."

[2] The duchess says, in reply to the regret expressed by Catherine de Medici on the assassination of the duc de Guise, "Il me semble, madame, que se n'ait sans grant raison, vu les services que M. de Guise faisoit à vous et au roy. Madame, il me semble que s'est une si méchante acte que doit faire encore plus de mal à tous ses parents que

The most intimate friendship, moreover, subsisted between the duchess of Lorraine and the widowed duchesse de Guise, Anne d'Esté, whose constant effort it was, in conjunction with her sons and the duc de Nemours her second husband, to bring the cause again before the high courts of the realm. After the quarrel of Monsieur with his sister Marguerite the duchess Claude had become the *confidente* of Henry's designs. Her zeal for the Romish faith rendered her friendship peculiarly acceptable to the duke; while her influence over the princes of Guise, with whom Monsieur lived at enmity, proved an additional and politic motive on the part of the duc d'Anjou for entertaining intimate relations with his sister.

On her arrival at her brother's court, the duchess with difficulty concealed her indignation at the power and the favour of Coligny. Her efforts thenceforth tended to inflame the resentment of the princes of Guise against the assassin of their father. She reproached her brother d'Anjou with his supine indifference to the intrigues of the Huguenots for the overthrow of Romish dominion in France; and she exhorted her mother to deliver the realm from the stigma of heresy. The fate of M. de Lignerolles might, however, have afforded comforting assurance to the duchess Claude that her mother's retaliation on her adversaries only tarried for convenient time and opportunity, as Catherine speedily demonstrated.

By command of the queen the duc de Guise, on leaving the Tuileries, visited his mother the duchesse de Nemours, and imparted a message, which was followed

s'il fut mort comme un homme de bien, tel qu'il l'étoit en effet. Mais, madame, ce qui nous recomforte le plus s'est l'assurance que nous avons que vous punirez les malheureux et méchants qui sont cause: car nous nous assurons que vous n'oublièrez les services qu'il vous a fait, etc."—A la Reyne, madame et mère.

by the departure of the duchess for Catherine's palace of Monceaux. The duc d'Anjou at the same time escorted thither his sisters, the duchess Claude and the princess Marguerite. Catherine, meantime, entered her coach, and, attended by one lady, quitted Paris with the greatest secrecy, and followed the king to Montpipeau. Such was her majesty's speed on the road, that two of the horses of her coach dropped down dead.[1] Charles had scarcely arrived at the château when his mother was announced. Catherine repaired to her son's cabinet, and at first, as she expected, found the king obdurate to her remonstrances. Gradually and forcibly, however, she developed the inevitable consequences of the admiral's policy—the subversion of the orthodox faith, and the alienation of the most potent allies of the crown of France. She reproached the king with his ingratitude; she wept—then the queen's voice rose in eloquent denunciation, wherein every word she uttered was skilfully chosen to rouse the fears, passions, and prejudices of her son, which none knew better than Catherine how to inflame and smite. Finally, Catherine, avowing her utter inability to rescue the king from the perils which encircled him, proclaimed her intention to return no more to Paris, but to seek refuge from the impending calamities of the realm in Auvergne, her own maternal heritage.[2] "Monseigneur!" exclaimed Catherine, emphatically, "never could I have believed that, after having laboured so assiduously to preserve your crown, assailed at one time by Roman Catholic and Huguenot, and after the

[1] Le Tocsain contre les Massacreurs. Mém. de l'Etat de France. L'Histoire des Cinq Rois.

[2] The mother of Catherine de Medici was Madelaine de la Tour d'Auvergne, who was the daughter of Jean de la Tour, count of Auvergne and Bologne, and of Marie de Bourbon, daughter of François comte de Vendôme. The duchess of Urbino and her sister Anne, duchess of Albany, were co-heiresses.

perils I have incurred in your behalf, that you would have rendered me so miserable. You hide from me your counsels, I who am your mother, to heed the perfidious advice of your enemies. You tear yourself from the arms which so long have shielded you, to throw yourself into those of the traitors whose design it is to assassinate you! I am well informed of the secret conferences which you have holden with the admiral and his Huguenots; and that you have been induced to make war against Spain for the purpose only that they may obtain possession more readily of your realm and royal person. Concede to me, at least, the poor privilege of retiring to my own hereditary possessions; banish from your presence and counsels your brother d'Anjou, who may truly now be deemed unhappy to have ever risked his life in your service. Permit him, at any rate, I beseech you, sire, to withdraw from personal danger, ere the enemies whom he has made in doing you service consummate their ascendency in the state; chiefs are they of a rebel faction, who desire only a war with Spain that they may carry its ravages into France, and so establish themselves on the ruin of all governments and authority!"[1] The queen's impassioned harangue, her aspect and manner, paralyzed the king. Catherine's children, while they chafed under her yoke, were conscious of their own inferiority; and from the shelter of her genius in emergencies present and imminent, they dared not depart. All Catherine's ancient influence over the mind of her son revived as Charles listened to her words: his promises to Coligny were forgotten in the perplexity wrought by his mother's predictions. Incapable of dispassionate reflection, Charles in imagination beheld himself betrayed and dethroned by the Huguenots; and when the queen commented on the strength of their faction, and en-

[1] Mém. de Tavannes, chap. xxvii.

larged, as she well knew how, on the audacity which had presumed to menace the sovereign with intestine commotions, his alarm became boundless. The project, moreover, of the proposed retirement from the capital of the queen and her son d'Anjou, added to the misgivings which harassed the mind of the king. "The king," says de Tavannes, one of the most ardent upholders of the policy of Catherine de Medici, "at this juncture felt greater dread of the probable designs of his mother and his brother than of the proceedings of the Huguenots; for his majesty well appreciated their dexterity, ambition, and the power they wielded over his realm."[1] Bewildered, therefore, at the difficulties which surrounded him, Charles kissed his mother's hand, and humbly implored her not to abandon him. He promised the greatest docility to her future counsels, and vowed to undertake nothing without her sanction and approval. The queen, however, rejected his overtures, and bitterly reproached him for his past disloyalty; she then—while still declaring her intention to retire into Auvergne with Monsieur—took leave of the king, and entering her coach, proceeded to her *château* of Monceaux, leaving his majesty in a state of indescribable dismay and tribulation.

Catherine understood to perfection the art of controlling her son's wayward impulses. Scarcely, therefore, had the queen taken her departure than Charles followed his mother to Monceaux. Another scene of mingled violence and tender reproach followed; and the matter ended as Catherine intended it should, by the queen receiving from her son a formal prohibition forbidding her to abandon his council. The duc d'Anjou, meantime, being presented by his mother, received a fraternal embrace; the secretary de Saure also performed his share in the comedy by going down on his

[1] Mém. de Tavannes, chap. xxvii.

knees before the king, in the presence of the illustrious company assembled, and entreating pardon for having divulged the secrets confided to his ear. A council was then holden, at which were present Monsieur, the maréchals de Retz and de Tavannes, and the secretary de Sauve. "There," says de Tavannes, "the disloyalty, the audacity, prowess, menaces, and violence of the Huguenots were magnified and exaggerated by such an infinity of mingled truths and artifices, that, from being the friends of the king, his majesty was led to regard them as enemies. His majesty, nevertheless, fluctuated greatly, not being able all at once to relinquish the hope of the glory and reputation to be gained by the Spanish war." The queen and Monsieur, however, had gained everything by their triumph over what was termed "the king's infatuation for Coligny." They had succeeded, by rousing the personal apprehensions of the king, in causing him to doubt the loyalty of the admiral; and therefore, assured of the ultimate ascendency of their policy, they boldly proceeded to follow their successful step by others which should deliver them for ever from all future apprehension. The death of Coligny was therefore boldly determined, though this design was not imparted to the king. The resolution was taken, in the first instance, privately by the queen and Monsieur, who, after having discussed the design in all its details, summoned the duchesse de Nemours, and imparted their decision. The queen represented "that never would the Catholic party recover its legitimate ascendency as long as Coligny's plausible counsels might penetrate to the king's ear; for that at every momentary displeasure which his majesty might hereafter experience at the actions of his orthodox subjects, he would recall the admiral, so that the present *menées* would perpetually recur." The duc d'Anjou coincided with his mother's opinion, and laid the utmost

stress on the necessity of ridding the state of the admiral, "as it was his belief that the Huguenot party might be said to be concentrated in his person." He also remarked that the death of the admiral would be legal, judicial, and in accord with repeated edicts of the parliament which had never been repealed. Anne d'Esté listened and applauded. Blinded by the vehemence of the hate which she bore Coligny, the widow of François de Guise overlooked the perfidious nature of the proposal, however it might be glossed over by the sophistry of Monsieur.

The assassination of Coligny being resolved upon, the queen and her son proceeded to discuss the most feasible mode of executing their purpose. The design, it was agreed, should be confided only for the present to the duc de Guise and his uncle the duc d'Aumale; and a missive was despatched by Monsieur, addressed to the last-mentioned prince. "The queen-mother," says a historian[1] in the confidence of Catherine, "alive to her own danger and to that of M. d'Anjou, satisfied with having indisposed the mind of the king her son against the admiral, resolved, in accord with two counsellors only and M. d'Anjou, the death of the admiral, without imparting her design to the king. Her majesty knowing that M. l'amiral was the representative of his party, which through him might be smitten effectually; and believing that the marriage of her daughter with the king of Navarre would subsequently adjust all after the said execution made, she determined on the blow, shielding herself under plea of the animosity of the princes of Guise, whose father had been slain by the connivance of the said admiral."

The matter thus put in train, the royal party, with the king, returned to Paris on the day but one following. Of all the counsellors of Monsieur, Cheverny his

[1] Mémoires de Gaspard de Tavannes, maréchal de France, ch. xxvii.

chancellor possessed most influence over his mind. The idea of quitting France overwhelmed Henry with grief; and Cheverny had insinuated that, once rid of Coligny —who hated Monsieur with special hatred as his conqueror at Jarnac and Moncontour—this exile would no longer be insisted upon by the king. Henry's indignation at the treatment which he experienced from his brother was kindled into fury by the habitual disrespect shown towards the queen-mother, and her menaced fall from power; and by the zealous admonitions of his sister Claude. The duc d'Anjou himself made full avowal of the share he took in the calamitous events impending, when on the throne of Poland. Deprived, during his sojourn in Warsaw, of the society and pleasures which he loved, Monsieur was in his solitude brought to examine his past career, and to relieve the poignancy of remorse by confession. The authenticity of this important document has never been doubted. It is said, however, that, as the duke must have been naturally anxious to palliate his share in the transaction, his testimony ought to be received with reservation. Yet Henry, while declaring his conviction that his sincere zeal for the orthodox faith vindicated his deeds, accuses himself of connivance so atrocious and resolute, in the assassination of Coligny and the subsequent events, as to leave little to the imagination of those most inimical. Monsieur's own account of his share in these counsels is as follows: "Feeling assurance, from the menacing conduct of the king, that the admiral had inspired his majesty with a bad and sinister opinion of the queen my mother and of myself, we resolved to rid ourselves of him, and to call to our aid madame de Nemours, to whom we held that we might reveal our projects from the mortal hate which we knew that she bore towards the said admiral. We therefore sent for the said lady, and after having consulted with

her on the means of accomplishing this our design, we sent for a certain Gascon captain named ——.[1] As soon as this person presented himself, I said, 'Captain, the queen my mother and myself have selected you from amongst our faithful servants, as a man of trust, valour, and of courage elevated enough to conduct an enterprise we have projected, which is to perpetrate a bold stroke of hand upon a certain personage to be hereafter named. Reflect whether you have the courage and address to undertake such!' We saw, however," continues the duke, "from the rough and agitated manner in which our captain responded in the affirmative to my question, that he was not the man to execute the design; but to obviate suspicion, we made him explain the manner he proposed to set about the task; when, being thereupon more convinced by his words, gestures, and countenance that he was too volatile and light-headed for our purpose, we dismissed him, feigning to laugh, as if the whole conference had been undertaken but by way of jest. The queen my mother and myself thereupon resolved to employ Maurevel, as being an instrument more fit to achieve our designs, and one already experienced in the deed of assassination, as he had succeeded in the business of Mouy. We therefore, without loss of time, summoned him; and having incontinently revealed our design to animate him the more to the enterprise, we told him that, if he had regard for his own safety, he must not refuse to become our agent; for did the said Maurevel chance to fall into the hands of the admiral, that he would receive ill-treatment on account of the murder of the said de Mouy. After having, therefore, long debated the subject, we next took counsel on the best mode of executing the enterprise, and found no better expedient than that suggested by madame de Nemours, who proposed

[1] Name illegible in the original MS.

that the shot (coup d'arquebuse) should be fired from the window of the house where Villemur[1] lodged—a spot very conveniently placed for our enterprise."[2] Such is the account given by Henry of his share in the relentless counsels of the queen. Although the murder of Coligny was thus deliberately planned, no evidence can be found to prove that the subsequent massacre was contemplated. The queen and her son hoped to get rid of a dangerous rival by a crime which in those days had proved too often successful; and for which the assassination of Guise before Orléans furnished a terrible precedent. Catherine, aware that all requisite formalities were in readiness for the immediate marriage of her daughter Marguerite with the king of Navarre, nourished the futile hope that the Huguenots, reassured by this union, and beholding their chief allied closely as possible with the royal family, would suffer the fall of Coligny to remain unavenged. Probably the queen's expectations would have been realized had the plot for the assassination of Coligny been successful. Its imperfect execution roused the fiercest animosity and distrust between the antagonistic factions; which, neither party having wisdom and forbearance enough to control, prepared the subsequent catastrophe of St. Bartholomew's-Eve.

[1] Pierre de Pille de Villemur, canon of St. Germain, formerly preceptor to the duke of Guise.

[2] Discours de Henry III. à une personne d'honeur et de qualité étant près de sa majesté à Cracovie sur les causes et motifs de la St. Barthélémy.—MS. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, 63, 68. The personage to whom Henry made this relation is believed by some to be his first physician Miron; by others, the king's companion was his gentleman of the chamber, M. de Souvré.

CHAPTER IV.

1572.

Marriage of Henri king of Navarre and Marguerite de Valois—Festivities consequent on the marriage—Assassination of the amiral de Coligny—The king visits the admiral—Relation of this interview by the duc d'Anjou—The massacre of St. Bartholomew's-day.

On the 16th day of August, 1572, Marguerite de Valois and the king of Navarre were betrothed at the Louvre by the cardinal de Bourbon. The following day, Sunday, August 17th, the public ceremonial of their nuptials was performed on an elevated platform reared in front of the portal of Notre Dame.[1] The bride was led to the altar between her brothers, the king and the duc d'Anjou. Marguerite to the last persisted in her system of silent deprecation of the alliance: if she offered no resistance, she gave no assent. Davila asserts that at the moment when the officiating prelate demanded of the princess whether she were willing to accept the king of Navarre for her husband, Marguerite resolutely refused to respond. At last the king impatiently advanced and compelled his sister to incline her head, which gesture was interpreted as a token in the affirmative.[2] Marguerite, however, herself states that she pronounced the accustomed form of words. When the ceremony of the espousals concluded, the king of Navarre

[1] Godefroy: Grand Cérém. de France, tome ii. Bénédiction nuptiale de Henri Roi de Navarre et de madame Marguerite de France.

[2] Davila, tome i. liv. 24.

conducted his beautiful bride before the high altar where mass was to be said, and then quitted the cathedral by another door, attended by the prince de Condé and the Huguenot noblemen in his train. The duc d'Anjou took his place beside Marguerite under the canopy of state, as the representative of the bridegroom. At the conclusion of mass the king of Navarre joined his bride, and escorted her in great pomp to the hall of the episcopal palace, where the banquet was to be holden. The historian de Thou was an eye-witness of the pageant of Marguerite's nuptials: "After mass was concluded," he relates,[1] "I leaped over the barrier placed before the entrance of the choir of Notre Dame to keep back the crowds of spectators. I found myself close to the amiral de Coligny, and gazing at him with the greatest attention, I perceived that he was showing to Damville[2] the banners captured from the Huguenots at Jarnac and Moncontour, which were suspended from the walls of the church—a sorrowful memento of the defeat of their party. I heard the admiral utter the words, "Very shortly these will be down, and in their stead other standards more agreeable to our sight shall replace them!" The admiral doubtlessly then alluded to the war against Philip II., which he believed to have been resolved.

In the evening after the banquet, Catherine gave a *ballet* and *masque*, at which, however, as it was Sunday, few of the Huguenot leaders were present. Coligny excused himself on the plea of indisposition. The duc de Guise likewise, after officiating as grand chamberlain during the ceremony of the espousals and at the subsequent banquet, obtained his majesty's permission to retire; a circumstance which, in conjunction with the

[1] Hist. de son Temps, liv. lii. Registres MS. de l'Hôtel de Ville.

[2] Henri de Montmorency, second son of the constable Anne de Montmorency, governor of Languedoc and marshal of France.

visible depression of the bride, excited some comment and speculation. The gallant bearing and mental qualities of her husband, however, might have consoled Marguerite for the loss of Guise. The commanding intellect of the deceased queen of Navarre had hitherto shadowed the renown of Henri d'Albret. The humour of the king of Navarre was easy and facetious; his deportment was dignified; and although Henri loved pleasure and dalliance to the full as well as the duc d'Anjou, he never forgot his position or degraded himself by the adoption of the frivolous modes of the court. His disposition was generous and magnanimous: he was profuse in his expenditure and liberal to all. In his youth Henri had spent many years at the court of France under the protection of Catherine de Medici. During this period, therefore, Henri had been initiated in the accomplishments befitting the gallant cavalier. His taste for poetry was fostered by Catherine; who taught her young protégé to dwell with delight on the melodious verse of her own countrymen, Dante and Tasso. Best of all, however, Henri loved the chivalrous romance or the martial ballads of the troubadours. On the return of the prince to his mother's guardianship, however, the austere Jeanne d'Albret was scandalized at the frivolity of her son's acquirements; and by her directions sterner studies were substituted, and Henri's favourite lays and romances exchanged for the dry dissertations of Theodore de Bèze or Calvin, and the eloquent wisdom of Plato. The result of this compulsory application was that Henri, when he attained to manhood cordially abjured learning, while the study of military tactics became his dominant passion. The frankness of Henri's manner, however, charmed the king; and many were the bitter jests which fell from Charles's lips as he contrasted the manly bearing of the

king of Navarre with the foppery of M. d'Anjou and his associates.

On the evening of Wednesday, the 20th of August, the king gave a *masque* and *ballet* in honour of his sister's nuptials, at which the principal courtiers, Huguenot as well as orthodox, were present. It has been pretended that this *masque* actually pictured forth the tragedy which was to ensue. Yet on most festive occasions, from the time of François I., it had been the custom of the French court to select the subject of these entertainments from mythology[1]—representations of the Elysian fields and of the gloomy depths of Tartarus being especially in favour. The *fête* was holden in the hall of the hôtel de Bourbon,[2] in the presence of the royal bride and the court. "On one side of the hall," relates a chronicler,[3] "was shown Paradise defended by three knights in armour, the king, M. d'Anjou, and M. d'Alençon. Opposite was a Hell, in which a great number of devils and imps were making infinite foolery and noise. A great wheel turned to the said Hell, hung all over with little bells. The two regions were divided from each other by a river flowing between, on which was a boat guided by Charon, the ferryman of Hell. Beyond Paradise lay the Elysian fields, being a garden embellished by verdure and all sorts of beau-

[1] At the celebrated conference of Bayonne a masque was performed before the courts of France and Spain in which was a representation of the infernal regions, into which, after a combat, the vanquished were dragged. During the reign of Francis I. nothing was more popular than a representation of such *diablerie*.

[2] The hôtel de Bourbon occupied the ground between the south-eastern corner of the Louvre and the rue de Petit Bourbon. Its windows looked out upon the river. The hotel was the residence of the great constable of Bourbon, and passed to the crown on his attainder. The greater part of the building was destroyed in 1525 by command of Francis I. The chapel and a magnificent gallery existed until 1660.

[3] Mémoires de l'Etat de France sous Charles IX.

teous flowers; and the empyrean Heaven, which was a great wheel with the twelve signs, the seven planets, and a multitude of smaller stars, giving forth light by means of lamps and flambeaux. This wheel was kept continually moving, and turned the garden round with it, in which sat twelve nymphs very richly arrayed. There now presented themselves in the hall several companies of Huguenot knights in complete armour and attired in divers liveries, who, led by their princes and lords, tried to gain the entrance of Paradise, that they might go in quest of the nymphs of the garden. These, however, were hindered by the three knights, who stood there on guard, and who came forth into the lists; and having broken their lances against the said assailants, struck them with their cutlasses, drove them back towards Hell, into which they were then dragged by devils." The farce concluded by the recitation of various poems by the court minstrel, Etienne le Roy. The king and his brothers then made progress to the Elysian fields, and conducted thence the twelve fair damsels to the ball-room, where a marvellous pastime ensued. The following day lists were opened for a tilt at the ring in the courtyard of the Louvre; but owing to the lateness of the hour, only a few courses were run. The evening was likewise signalized by gorgeous revelry, which lasted until late on the morning of the 21st day of August.[1]

Coligny meantime suspected no change in the goodwill of the king, and fervently believed in the certainty of the approaching campaign in Flanders and the consequent downfall of the power possessed by the queen-mother and the Guises. The king, however, conscious and embarrassed, avoided the presence of the admiral; and appeared absorbed in the dissipated revels of the court, to the exclusion of state business of any descrip-

[1] Mémoires de l'Estat de France sous Charles IX., p. 195.

tion. Charles, however, remained in positive ignorance of the resolution taken by the duc d'Anjou and his mother to attempt the admiral's life; and dreaded only the embarrassment of withdrawing the pledges deliberately given to Coligny respecting the war with Spain and other privileges which he had spontaneously granted to the Huguenots. Deputies from certain of the reformed churches of France arrived in Paris during these transactions, bringing a report of various grievances, which they prayed the admiral to present for redress to the sovereign. When Coligny asked for audience Charles excused himself, saying, "Mon père, I pray you grant me yet four or five days of pleasure; and after that I promise you, on the faith of a king, to give you and those of your religion content!"[1] Coligny, however, demonstrated great displeasure, and even threatened to quit Paris without delay; a step which he imprudently said would sound the first trumpet of civil warfare.[2] The same day Monsieur commanded the entrance into Paris of a regiment of 1200 arquebusiers. Part of these troops were posted round the Louvre, and the rest stationed at distant points of the city. In reply to the inquiries of the admiral as to the destination of these soldiers, he was told "that the king feared the enmities of the three factions of Guise, Montmorency, and Châtillon; and that for the protection of the royal family, no less than for that of the hostile chieftains, these troops had been summoned."[3] Another council was holden in Catherine's apartments during the evening of the 21st, the duc d'Anjou, the ducs de Guise and d'Aumale, the duchesse de Nemours, and the maré-

[1] L'Estoile: Journal de Henri III., Roy de France, p. 45.

[2] "L'amiral continue ses menaces, importune, menace de partir qui étoit le premier son de trompette de guerre civile."—Mém. de Gaspard de Tavannes, maréchal de France, chap. xxvi.

[3] Mém. de l'Estat de France—Relation du Massacre de la St. Barthélémy. De Thou: Hist. de son Temps.

chal de Tavannes being present. It was then determined that the assault on the life of Coligny should be made early on the following morning;[1] and Maureval being summoned, received his instructions from the lips of Monsieur.

Between eight and nine on the morning of Friday, the 22nd of August, the admiral proceeded to the Louvre by appointment to accommodate some differences which had arisen between the lords of Guercy and Thianges. After adjusting the dispute to the satisfaction of the maréchals de Cossé and de Tavannes, who had been chosen as umpires by one of the aggrieved parties, Coligny entered the council-chamber. Several members were present; but the deliberations were presided over by the duc d'Anjou in the absence of the king, who on that morning had risen late. Coligny presented a petition, which asked for the immediate grant of a sum of money for the pay of the German reiters, who had served in the Huguenot ranks during the late civil commotions, and spoke for some interval warmly in support of his prayer.[2] On leaving the cabinet Coligny met the king in the court of the Louvre, his majesty having just quitted the chapel where he had heard matins with the queen his mother. Charles cordially greeted the admiral, and taking him familiarly by the arm, compelled him to enter the tennis-court, where his majesty, the duc de Guise, and Téligny were going to take a brief diversion. Coligny watched the play for some short interval, and then quitted the Louvre. The admiral was accompanied by MM. de Guercy and de Pruneaux, being followed at a

[1] Mezeray states that this council was holden in the house of Gondy, maréchal de Retz, at the Pont de St. Cloud.

[2] Etoile: Mémoires pour l'Histoire de France. De Thou. Davila, tome i. Mém. de l'Etat de France. Mezeray: Relation du Roy de Pologne, Henri III.—MS. Bibl. Imp., Dupuy, fol. 63.

little distance by the brave Huguenot chieftains de Pilles and the sieur de Monneins. The party proceeded on foot towards the hôtel in the rue de Bethisy. The house of the canon Villemur, at the trellised window of which, according to the suggestion of madame de Nemours, the assassin was posted,[1] was in the rue des Fossés St. Germain. Maureval rested his arquebuse on the iron trellis, before which, the better to conceal himself, he had suspended a blind of black serge. The admiral was walking slowly, perusing a paper, which some one had just presented. The assassin took deliberate aim and fired. One ball struck the admiral on the shoulder and lodged in the left arm, and the second carried away the forefinger of his right hand. A deadly pallor spread over the features of Coligny; on presently recovering, he indicated the house from which the shot had been fired, and calmly turning to de Pilles, said, "Go and inform his majesty of that which has happened to me!" Guerchy perceiving that the admiral was growing faint, supported him in his arms, while de Monneins bound the wounds with a handkerchief. The admiral was then conveyed to his house, and a messenger despatched to summon the famous surgeon Ambrose Paré to dress the wounds.[2]

Meanwhile the door of the canon's house was forced by a party of Coligny's gentlemen; but the assassin had made his escape by the cloister of the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, which adjoined the house, and into which a small door opened. The arquebuse, however, was found resting on the iron grating; it was seized, examined, and identified as one of those with

[1] Maureval arrived in Paris on the 18th of August. After an interview with the queen and Monsieur, he was committed to the care of one Chailly, who took him to lodge at the house of de Villemur by command of the duc de Guise. De Serres—Hist. des Cinq Rois.

[2] Le Tocsain contre les Massacreurs. De Thou. Mém. de l'Etat de France. Mém. de Tavannes, Cheverny, &c.

which the men of the duc d'Anjou's corps-de-gardes were armed.[1] The identification of this arquebuse, by fixing suspicion on the duke, first inspired the project of the subsequent tragedy. Catherine and her favourite son trembled before the threats and the insinuations of the Huguenot chieftains; an indignity which their blood alone could efface.

The king was still playing at tennis with the duc de Guise when de Pilles appeared and delivered his ominous intelligence. Oaths too blasphemous to record poured from the mouth of Charles; he flung away his racket, and rushed into the palace in a frenzy of rage. There he commanded the arrest of the duc de Guise, to whose agency the king attributed the disaster. Guise, however, profiting by the consternation which prevailed, quitted the Louvre, and sought refuge in his own hôtel, where he lay hidden during the space of a day, until the vehemence of the king's wrath had subsided.[2]

The dismay of the queen and the duc d'Anjou was indescribable; if before they had deemed their position precarious, it had now become perilous in the extreme. They beheld Paris in tumult, the Huguenots in arms, the king exasperated to a pitch of frenzy, and their designs as far as ever from accomplishment. "Our fine enterprise failing, gave my mother and myself, as may be imagined, ample subject for reflection and uneasiness during the greater part of the day," says the duc d'Anjou. Already tumultuous gatherings thronged the streets of the capital; and a dense crowd choked up every avenue to the rue des Fossés, where the murderous attempt had been made, a spot in dangerous vicinity to the Louvre. Such was the excited state of

[1] De Tavannes, chap. xxvii. Mém. de Jacques Pape, Seigneur de St. Auban, p. 18.

[2] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite, liv. i.

the populace, that at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, one hour and a half after the shot had been fired, the authorities of Paris deemed it requisite to arm the city guards; a detachment of arquebusiers, moreover, was posted before the Hôtel de Ville, while strong guards were placed at the city gates.[1]

The king of Navarre, Condé, and the count de la Rochefoucault immediately proceeded to the admiral's residence. They found him in bed under the hands of Paré, who had extracted the ball from the arm and amputated the finger shattered by the bullet. The operation had been severe, yet Coligny preserved his serenity and courage. Gradually the principal Huguenot leaders in Paris assembled, some in the chamber of the wounded man, others in the lower apartments of the house or in the street. Some wept for the catastrophe, others menaced and proposed an immediate recourse to arms; a few, the most prudent, suggested an immediate retreat from Paris. Coligny, calm amid this storm of conflicting emotions, conversed with the king of Navarre, or with the minister Merlin, who never quitted his bedside. The maréchals Damville and de Cossé presently entered the chamber. Damville, showing signs of great emotion, approached the admiral, and declared that no event had before fallen so heavily on his heart; nevertheless, he prayed and besought M. l'amiral to take patience. "Monseigneur," continued he, "I dare not, nor do I presume to exhort you, whose high mission it is to set an example to others; but tell me what I can do to render you service. I marvel greatly who could be the originator of this foul crime!" "I suspect no one if it be not M. de

[1] Registres et Croniques de la Ville de Paris—Archives du Royaume de France. Datée le 22 Aoust, 1572. The ordinance is "de par les prévost des marchands et échevins de la ville de Paris."

Guise; but yet do I not affirm such to be a fact," responded Coligny.[1] Meanwhile a diversity of opinion prevailed as to the steps to be immediately taken. The vidame de Chartres[2] insisted that the admiral should be removed from his present quarters, as he perceived many suspicious indications. Téligny, the son-in-law of Coligny, as resolutely opposed the design, saying "that it would be doing the king great and signal injury to doubt his word and sincerity." "Téligny," says a historian[3] of these events, "showed more credulity than any other; also Briquemaut joined in the opposition, so that, unhappily, the stay of the admiral was resolved upon for the space at least of two days, when it was hoped that he could be removed without danger.

Meanwhile a great muster of the Huguenots to the number of four hundred had been called by de Pilles and the baron de Pardaillan Ségur. All these personages were armed, and wore steel cuirasses and helmets. Under the guidance of de Pilles and Pardaillan this formidable band set out for the Louvre, to demand audience of the king.[4] On their road they passed the hôtels de Guise, de Nevers, and d'Aumale, which with fierce outcries and gestures they threatened to assault. Some adherents of the house of Guise appeared on the balcony of the hôtel de Nevers and protested that the princes of Lorraine were guiltless of the blood of Coligny; and appealed to the king to confirm the truth of their statement.[5] At the Louvre all continued in consternation. The king, according to his custom, raved and menaced; while his excitement ren-

[1] Mém. de l'Etat de France, tome i. fol. 197, verso.

[2] Jean de Ferrières, seigneur de Maligny.

[3] Hist. de notre Temps. La Popelinière, tome ii. fol. 64. Mém. de Sully.

[4] Mezeray: Grande Histoire de France. Vie de Charles IX.

[5] Mém. de Tavannes, chap. xxvii.

dered him incapable of issuing a single efficient command. All his usual counsellors had abandoned the palace; the ducs de Guise, Nevers, Nemours, and the maréchal de Tavannes had precipitately retired to their hôtels, which were barricaded and prepared to resist an assault. The maréchal de Montmorency had prudently withdrawn from the capital to Chantilly; a retreat which eventually saved the Montmorenci from destruction. About the person of Charles there remained only the comte de Retz, the most independent, however, of all Catherine's Italian protégés. But the peril of the crisis aroused the latent energies of Catherine's soul. Alone she presently stood by her son to defend him from the consequences of her own treacherous violence. Calm, able, and resolute, she summoned to her aid those unparalleled powers of present resource which throughout her chequered career had never yet failed her.

On hearing of the approach of de Pilles and his Huguenots, Charles became much agitated, and turning to Catherine and the duc d'Anjou *il commença de les regarder tout estonné.*[1] The queen replied by commanding the drawbridge of the Louvre to be lowered, that free access might be permitted to the king her son. "Monsieur," said she, addressing the king, "you will promise that justice shall be done. No one of your court must quit the Louvre; and as for the rest, we will look to it!" The Huguenots presently entered the royal presence, and with vehement words demanded instant vengeance on the assassin of Coligny. The king of Navarre and the prince de Condé joined the assemblage; and threatened to quit Paris unless immediate redress were granted, and guarantees given for the future security of their party by the banishment of the

[1] Relation du Massacre de la St. Barthélemy. Mém. de l'Etat de France sous Charles IX. De Thou. Mezeray.

princes of Lorraine from Paris. The name of the duc d'Anjou as the author of the crime was even daringly murmured. These warlike demonstrations, the clamour and the fierce gestures of the Huguenot captains struck the spectators with terror. The king, who believed at this time that the murderous attempt on the life of Coligny proceeded from the machinations of the Guise faction, strode forward, and with a terrible oath swore that the admiral's blood should be atoned for. The duc d'Anjou likewise counterfeited intense indignation at the outrage. Catherine shed tears; she then observed, "that the crime affected not only the person of the admiral but the safety of the king; for that if his majesty suffered so notable an outrage to pass unavenged to-day, to-morrow the same murderous assault would be made on his majesty in his bed, or perhaps even while in her own arms."[1]

The imprudence of these menaces on the part of the Huguenots could scarcely be surpassed. Their threats, afterwards repeated to the king by his mother and brother, lashed the unfortunate monarch into a frenzy of rage and distrust against those who so boldly taunted him in his capital. "*Vrai, c'étoient de vrais fous et malhabiles!*" exclaimed the valiant la Noue when the intelligence of these proceedings reached him in his distant command. If, on the contrary, one of the Huguenot leaders had approached the king in a spirit of obedience and conciliation—for at this period Charles was guiltless of any enterprise hostile to the lives of his Huguenot subjects—and if the baneful counsels of Catherine and the duc d'Anjou had been thus neutralized—the crisis might have passed without the further outpouring of blood. "If the queen," says de Tavannes, "could have evaded investigation into the cause of the arquebuse ball, its authors and prompters, her majesty

[1] Mathieu: Vie de Charles IX. Mezeray.

would never have proceeded to the extremity to which she was compelled. The accident, unforeseen as it was, of the admiral being wounded only and not killed outright, compelled the council to decree the death of all the Huguenot chieftains."[1] All, however, was terror and confusion—the chieftains menaced, but not one acted. Condé and the king of Navarre had their abode in the Louvre. La Rochefoucault was young and thoughtless, and the boon companion of Charles. Téligny, incapable of believing evil, and therefore unsuspicious, rejected any *arrière pensée* which should affect his belief in the loyalty of the royal pledge. Pardaillan, Pilles, Montamar, and other valiant captains were bluff warriors and unscrupulous—men accustomed to clinch a difficulty by the sword rather than by the wiles of diplomacy.

At two o'clock the same day, Charles, his mother, and the duc d'Anjou set out to pay a visit to the admiral. They were accompanied by the duc de Montpensier, the duc d'Alençon, the cardinal de Bourbon, the maréchals de Cossé and Damville, and the lords of Thoré and Méru, sons of the deceased constable Anne de Montmorency. Charles throughout the route preserved unbroken silence, scarcely responding to the observations of the queen and Monsieur; and omitting even, in his abstraction, the usual salute to the images of our Lady placed at the corners of the streets. A crowd of Huguenot gentlemen filled the rue de Béthizy: their sombre looks, bent on the royal cortège as it defiled, prognosticated revenge. The admiral's house, even to the roof, was crowded with noted personages professing the reformed creed. Through files of Huguenot gentlemen, therefore, was Charles, with his mother and his brother, ushered into the chamber of the wounded man. Charles approached the bed, and asked the

[1] Mémoires du Maréchal de Tavannes, chap. xxvii.

admiral how he felt. Coligny replied; adding many expressions of thanks to his sovereign for the honour he had done him in condescending to pay him a visit. Coligny then addressed the king on the condition of the realm generally. Despite his exhausted state, he again exhorted Charles to declare war against Spain. "Is it not a scandal, sire," exclaimed he, "that there is not a word uttered in your council but a courier conveys it into Spain?" He then pressed upon the king the observance of the edicts of pacification. "M. l'amiral," replied Charles, "I hold you to be a man of honour, and a good Frenchman. I have always wished to observe my edicts of pacification, in furtherance of which, I have despatched ordinances throughout my provinces. My mother will add her assurances to mine." Catherine then approached and confronted the admiral. "The king speaks the truth, M. l'amiral; and you are well aware of it!"—"Yes, madame," retorted Coligny, "I know well that ordinances have been despatched into the provinces; and, amongst others, one condemning me to the gallows, with a reward of 50,000 crowns for him who should bring you my head!" —"I will despatch others in lieu," hastily interposed Charles. "But I see, M. l'amiral, that you are exciting yourself. You are grievously wounded, but it is I who feel the smart of your wound! Par le mort Dieu! I will avenge this outrage in so signal a manner that the memory of the penalty shall be eternal!" The admiral then said, "that his majesty need not seek far for the culprit."—"Let M. de Guise be questioned, sire; he will confess through whose *bienveillance* I lie here! Sire, I rely on your equity and on your justice to avenge this crime."—"Par le mort Dieu, M. l'amiral! I protest and promise that I will do you justice. The woman of the house from whence the shot was fired lies in prison; also the lackey who was found in the house. Is it your

desire that my regular judges should inquire into the matter?" Coligny requested that Cavagnes, one of the Masters of Requests, might be on the commission; also M. de Masparault.[1] "This conversation over," writes the duc d'Anjou,[2] "the admiral wished to speak privately with the king; the which his majesty freely granted, making a sign to my mother and to myself to retire. We accordingly quitted the bed and stood in the middle of the chamber, where we remained during this private colloquy, which gave us great suspicion and uneasiness. Moreover, we saw ourselves surrounded by more than two hundred gentlemen and valiant captains, partisans of the admiral, who filled an adjacent chamber and also the hall below. These all had melancholy countenances, and showed by their gestures and signs how disaffected they were; some whispered, others did nothing but pass behind and before us, and omitted to pay us the honour and reverence which were our due, as if they suspected us of having caused the wound of the admiral. We then began to feel great apprehension at finding ourselves thus surrounded; so much so that the queen my mother has since acknowledged that never had she found herself in a more critical position. She therefore determined to put a stop to the converse between his majesty and the admiral under some plausible pretext. Approaching the king she therefore said, 'that he was wrong in permitting the admiral to excite himself by conversation, therefore she prayed his majesty to delay the remainder of his discourse until the morrow.'" This subtle device succeeded; and the king with great reluctance broke off his discourse. Charles then put

[1] Mém. de l'Etat de France sous Charles IX., tome i. Réveille-matin des François. Bouchet: Hist. de la Maison de Coligny, p. 548, et seq.

[2] Discours de Henri III. des Causes et Motifs de la Journée de St. Barthélemy—MS. Dupuy, Bibl. Imp. fol. 63-68.

some questions relative to the admiral's wounds. His majesty asked whether he had suffered much during the operation, and requested to see the ball which had been extracted. Observing that the sleeve of the gentleman who handed him the ball was wet with blood, Charles asked whether that was the blood of Coligny? A reply being made in the affirmative, and that the gentleman—the sieur de Monneins—had supported the admiral's arm during the operation, the king exclaimed, "that M. l'amiral was the most courageous and magnanimous man in the world!" Catherine then asked to be shown the bullet. "Glad am I," exclaimed her majesty, "that it has been extracted, for when M. de Guise was killed the physicians declared that his life would have been safe had they been able to find the ball." The maréchal de Retz then proposed that Coligny should be transported to the Louvre; but Mazille, one of the physicians, protested that such a design would endanger his patient's life. The royal party afterwards took leave and re-entered their coach.

Catherine with some circumlocution then asked the king the subject of his private discourse with the admiral. The king at first refused to satisfy his mother's impatience, but upon being pressed by his brother, Charles, bursting into one of his irrepressible fits of rage, exclaimed, "Madame, he told me that kings, to be respected, ought to have the guidance and government of their affairs; but that all the authority in this realm has been usurped by you and your son d'Anjou, and by the *mort Dieu* he is right."[1] The king on arriving at the Louvre shut himself up in his chamber, still vowing to avenge the blood of Coligny, whoever might be the culprit.

On the evening of this eventful day, about seven o'clock, the queen and Monsieur, with the queen of

[1] Discours de Henri III.

Navarre and the duchess Claude, supped in public, as was her majesty's custom. The Louvre was thronged with Huguenot chieftains, and amongst them came Pardaillan, who, in the hearing of the queen and Monsieur, again uttered expressions of extreme menace. "The queen my mother," writes Marguerite de Valois,[1] "perceiving that this event had so exasperated the mind of the Huguenots, that if timely remedy were not applied that very night they might attempt the life of the king and her own, she took the resolution of telling his majesty the whole truth, in order to warn him of the danger he was in. For this purpose she selected M. le maréchal de Retz, as she thought the king would learn the intelligence with more composure from the said de Retz than from any other, he being in great favour with his majesty. Accordingly, between the hours of nine and ten in the evening, de Retz repaired to the king's cabinet, and told his majesty that, as his very faithful and devoted servant, he dared no longer conceal from him his danger, did he continue in the resolution to avenge upon M. de Guise the attempt on the life of M. l'amiral; for that the said enterprise had been concerted not by M. de Guise alone, but by the queen-mother and Monsieur." The marshal ended by showing at length to the king that his life was equally in danger from the Catholic party in defence of the princes of Lorraine, as from the Huguenots, who believed his majesty to be a consenting party to the outrage committed on the admiral. The fact that the assassination of Coligny was undertaken without the cognizance or assent of the king, and that Charles had not therefore planned the subsequent massacre and its previous treachery, is thus attested by Marguerite, who confirms the statements made by her brother d'Anjou, the maréchal de Tavannes, and other contemporary authori-

[1] Mémoires, liv. i.

ties.[1] The revelation made by de Retz overpowered the king with horror and astonishment. For some time he made no reply; for Charles then fully comprehended the peril and complications surrounding him. Dexterously had Catherine played her rôle; but with still more subtle craft did she consummate the final overthrow of those who dared to brave her power.

The duc d'Anjou meantime sent to summon the duc de Guise to the Louvre. About midnight he arrived. Accompanied by the duke, Catherine and M. d'Anjou, with the duc de Nevers, the maréchal de Tavannes, and the chancelier de Birague, repaired to the presence of the king. With eloquent fervour Catherine then defended the course she had adopted. From their commencement she traced the progress of the religious troubles in France; and commented on the successive conspiracies of Amboise and Meaux—the object of these enterprises being to seize the sovereign, to impeach his ministers, and to overthrow the holy Roman faith. She then referred to the designs of Coligny to embroil France in a war with Philip II.; and spoke with indignant fervour on the audacity of subjects who had presumed without the sanction of the sovereign to make war upon and seize the territory of a potentate closely allied to the royal family of France. The queen next admonished her son that the Huguenot leaders were raising levies for a renewal of the war; and she affirmed that they had already enrolled ten thousand

[1] Amongst others holding the opinion that the massacre of St. Bartholomew was the consequence of the perilous complication of affairs, which resulted from the attempted assassination of Coligny, are Brantôme, the Calvinist la Popelinière, and Mathieu, historiographer to Henry IV. The latter told Mathieu that Villeroy, secretary of state to Charles IX., had owned to him that the massacre was not premeditated—that the queen in the first instance desired only to be rid of Coligny, whose influence and principles she dreaded. The fury of the Huguenots so terrified the government, that a universal proscription of the chieftains was resolved upon. This statement was believed to be the truth by Henry IV.

Swiss troops and ten thousand German reiters. Moreover, her majesty declared that the Catholic nobility of the realm, wearied and impoverished by the long civil wars, had determined, in case of a renewal of hostilities, to elect a captain-general, "so that you, monsieur, will remain isolated, suspected by both factions, and a cypher in your realm." "To rescue your kingdom, monsieur, from such ruin and calamity, upon the verge of which we stand, requires only one effectual stroke, which is to procure the death of M. l'amiral, the author and chief of all the Huguenot rebellions. The designs and the enterprises of the Huguenots will die with him; while your Catholic subjects, monsieur, propitiated by the sacrifice of a few factious men, will return to their obedience." Charles furiously replied that nothing should harm the admiral; and that all might look to it under peril of their lives. "The king," says the duc d'Anjou, "flew into an extreme passion, and appeared infuriated by the words spoken by the queen our mother." The duc d'Anjou then essayed the effects of his eloquence, and few excelled Monsieur in the art of rhetoric. The nobles in the train of Catherine next drew a vivid picture of the ruin of the realm and the danger of the king from the treasonable machinations of the admiral and his party. When it came to the turn of de Retz to speak, to the astonishment of all, he had the rectitude and humanity to advise his sovereign to reject the counsels pressed on him. "God forbid," exclaimed he, courageously, "that I should give my assent to any design so perfidious—one so fatal to the honour of France and to the repute of my king!" De Retz then addressed an earnest appeal to the queen his patroness, imploring her majesty to reconsider her proposal. A debate of some length ensued, but no one supported the merciful suggestions of the marshal. The nobles present, aware of the king's besetting foible,

united in drawing a terrible description of the personal peril which menaced his majesty from the revenge of those who had so insolently defied his authority, and sought to betray him into political error. These insinuations gradually irritated the mind of the unhappy Charles. Maddened by their taunts, he presently sprang fiercely from his chair and commanded silence, exclaiming "that, if it was thought good to kill the admiral, so it should be done; but that every Huguenot also in France should share the same fate, that not one might live to reproach him with his perfidy!"[1] Then addressing his mother and Monsieur, he commanded them to see his will executed. Catherine and Monsieur had obtained what they desired—the sanction of the king to their design for the proscription of the Huguenot chieftains; and without delay they concerted measures so as to render a revocation of this permission impossible. On quitting the king's cabinet the duc d'Anjou and the duc de Guise conferred together privately for upwards of an hour. It has been asserted that this interview was holden previously to the unfolding of the design for the assassination of Coligny and his chieftains to the king; but the course of events appears undoubtedly to indicate that this conference was subsequent, and dependent on the assent of Charles to the project.

Catherine meantime retired personally to superintend the dispatch of missives to the governors of the provinces. It is generally believed that these documents were warrants addressed to the king's lieutenants commanding the perpetration of similar massacres to the one contemplated in Paris throughout the kingdom; so that a simultaneous destruction of the Huguenots might be achieved. But with regard to Paris the strongest

[1] Discours de Henri III. sur les Causes et Motifs de la Journée de St. Barthélemy. Dupuy, 68, Bibl. Imp. Mezeray: Vie de Charles IX. Mém. de l'Etat de France.

presumptive evidence exists to show that Catherine did not contemplate nor even desire the promiscuous slaughter which ensued when the passions of the mob, inflamed to madness by carnage and riot, defied the control of its leaders. The chieftains of note were alone the marks at which the queen and her son d'Anjou aimed. Consequently it is to be presumed that the despatches written on the night of the 23rd were drawn up in accordance with the primary designs of the government; and that those contemporaneous relations which support this view of the case are true and genuine. Few of the original despatches are now extant; but two or three still exist, and afford irrefragable testimony that the *first* design of the government was to limit the proscription of the Huguenots to the chiefs then in the capital. The despatch signed by the king and forwarded by courier to the baron de Joyeuse, lieutenant-governor of Languedoc, and written so late as the morning of the 24th of August, commands de Joyeuse to maintain the public peace in his district. "You will watch that in all places and towns of your government the people remain tranquil within their own houses without taking arms or offending others, under pain of death. You will, moreover, take care to observe and cause to be observed my edicts of pacification," wrote the king. Charles in the former part of his letter details the events of the massacre, then accomplished. The death of the admiral he ascribes to political animosities, and to the arrogant deportment of the Huguenot chieftains.

Catherine had still to learn that the unbridled passion of a mob lawless and hostile, armed by the hand of its sovereign, was not to be curbed at pleasure.

Throughout that night, and during the greater part of the following day, Saturday, August 23rd, couriers departed almost hourly for the provinces. The frequent

opening and shutting of the city gates caused some uneasiness amongst the adherents of Coligny. At daybreak, under pretext of preserving public peace, parties of the king's guards were posted in the Louvre, and at intervals along the bank of the river; and an immense quantity of firearms was transported from the arsenal to the palace. An order was despatched to the city, commanding the provost to go over the streets of the different districts, and to take down the names of all the Huguenot chieftains lodging therein; and the number of the houses in which they resided, and transmit the report to the privy council[1]—the reason assigned for this command being that it was the king's intention to remove the Huguenots from amid a hostile population, and provide them with lodgings near to the Louvre. Great agitation, however, prevailed amongst the Huguenots; and early in the morning a number of the admiral's friends assembled in the garden of the Tuileries, and tumultuously demanded that cognizance should be taken of the crime attempted to be perpetrated by Maureval. The privy council being soon after assembled, the depositions of the parties arrested were submitted; a concession which gave great satisfaction to the Huguenots.[2] The attempt, nevertheless, to arrest Maureval had failed. Pursued by the royal archers as far as Villeneuve St. George, they beheld him mount another fleet horse which stood ready saddled by the road-side, and continue his flight, when he was soon conveniently lost sight of.[3]

After the rising of the council Charles sent to make affectionate inquiry after the health of the admiral, whose wound was reported to be in a favourable condition.

[1] Relation du Massacre de Paris—Mém. de l'Etat de France sous Charles IX. De Thou.

[2] Réveille-matin des François. Mém. de l'Etat de France.

[3] Mém. de St. Auban, p. 2.

The queen of Navarre also, attended by the duchesse de Nevers and by madame de Curton, paid Coligny a visit, and sat for some time by his bedside in discourse.[1] Meanwhile Catherine perceived that the mind of the king was still wavering; and that it was to be feared, when the hour arrived for action, that Charles would recoil. After dinner, therefore, she invited him to a final consultation, which was holden in the gardens of her hôtel des Tuileries. Here all the other chiefs of the council met their majesties. Catherine harangued the assemblage: she dilated wrathfully on the turbulence manifested by the Huguenots; and declared that the lives of the royal family were not safe from their conspiracies. "Do you not see, Monseigneur, that the admiral lies in his bed deprived of the use of his arms? The king of Navarre and the prince de Condé are lodged in the Louvre! The gates of the town are closed and the watch vigilant; so much so that none can flee hence! When once the chieftains of the Huguenots are no more, your majesty need not dread a renewal of the war. Sire, you have it now in your power to strike this blow! Their captains are unprepared. The Parisians can furnish us at this moment with 40,000 men-at-arms well equipped. If your majesty neglects the present opportunity, you may assure yourself that the admiral once cured, you will see France convulsed in the throes of a fourth civil contest."[2]

The question was then proposed whether the lives of the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé should be spared? Catherine herself decreed that no harm should happen to the king of Navarre, on account of his alliance with the royal family; while the safety of Condé was secured by the pleadings of the maréchal de Tavannes,

[1] Mém. de l'Etat de France.

[2] Mém. de l'Etat de France. De Tavannes. D'Aubigné; Hist. Universelle.

to whom the glory of this decision is attributed by his son and biographer. More probably, however, the life of Condé was spared owing to the intercession of his brothers-in-law the ducs de Nevers and de Guise. It was, nevertheless, stipulated that the king of Navarre and the prince de Condé should be compelled to embrace the Roman Catholic faith by menaces of torments and death.[1]

Scarcely had this conclave separated, and whilst the king lingered at the Tuileries, Téligny, Pardaillan, la Rochefoucault, and others entered the presence; and after commenting on the disturbed condition of Paris and the unusual numbers of soldiers abroad—which facts they alleged were suspicious and not to be accounted for—they demanded that his majesty would be pleased to send a detachment of archers to watch over the safety of the admiral. Charles showed strong emotion, and at first could not reply: he then commanded de Retz to summon the queen his mother, who was at hand. Catherine entered, accompanied by Monsieur. "What is this I hear, madame? I am told that the populace is in arms and disaffected!" exclaimed Charles, addressing his mother. "Sire, it is not a true report; your majesty yourself commanded that the city guard should turn out for fear of tumults!"[2] One of the Huguenots then reiterated the request that guards might be posted before the admiral's abode, for fear of the *menées de MM. de Guise.* "It is very well said," promptly replied the duc d'Anjou, "take Cosseins and fifty arquebusiers." In all their proceedings and demands the Huguenots seemed urged by some fatal

[1] Mém. de Tavannes, liv. xxvii. De Thou: Hist. de son Temps. Le Grain: Hist. de Henri IV. L'Etoile.

[2] Relation du Massacre: Mém. de l'Etat de France. Discours sur les Causes du Massacre—A Paris, 1572.

impulse to anticipate and aid in their own destruction. The notion upon which they alone *acted* was a distrust of the enmity of the princes of Lorraine: the idea upon which they *declaimed,* and which consummated their destruction, was the assertion that the duc d'Anjou had suborned assassins to murder the admiral. One of the envoys sent by Coligny remarked that six archers as a guard would suffice to prove that the admiral was under the king's protection. "No, no!" exclaimed the king and Monsieur simultaneously, "take Cosseins and his band. You could not make a better choice." This Cosseins bore the admiral inveterate hate; yet such was the manner of the king, that the Huguenot gentlemen departed without daring to offer a rejoinder. As they passed through the antechamber the sieur de Thoré whispered into the ear of one of their number, "The king could scarcely have delivered you all in guard to a greater enemy than Cosseins!" "Yes," was the response, "but the king's manner precluded remonstrance."[1] About four o'clock in the afternoon the duc d'Anjou, accompanied by the grand prior Henri d'Angoulême, entered a coach and drove through the streets of Paris. Meanwhile the provost of Paris had been summoned to a private conference with Catherine at the Louvre. The enterprise was frankly confided by her majesty to his ear, the provost being an orthodox Catholic. He was directed to assemble the city guard in arms—to lock and take possession of the keys of the city gates—to cause all the boats on the Seine to be moored along the Quai des Celestins, while the river was further to be guarded by chains stretched across the water at intervals. The queen gave commands that the artillery of the town should be in readiness for action; that a watch should be placed over the

[1] Relation du massacre: Mém. de l'Etat de France.

powder magazine; and guns mounted opposite to the Hôtel de Ville.[1]

The provost had at the same time an audience of the duc de Guise, who commanded him in the king's name to assemble at midnight in the Hôtel de Ville the captains and tithingmen of Paris, as "he had to communicate to them some new and secret counsel from the king their lord."[2]

The sieur de Cosseins repaired at dusk hour with his arquebusiers to the rue de Béthizy. He divided his men into two bands, and posted each in a shop adjacent to the abode of the admiral. At the same time the sieur de Rambouillet was sent by the duc d'Anjou to command any Catholic gentlemen lodging in that street to give up their abodes to the Huguenots, so that Coligny might be surrounded by his adherents and friends.

All things being thus prepared for the tragedy, the king and his mother supped together in public as usual, and then retired to their respective chambers, followed by the noble personages who habitually attended the *coucher* of their majesties. So secret had the contemplated enterprise been kept, that not a suspicion prevailed amongst those uninitiated in the royal counsels. The queen was attended to her chamber by her daughters, the queen of Navarre and the duchesse de Lorraine. "The Huguenots," writes queen Marguerite, "suspected me because I was a Catholic, and the Catholics doubted me because I had espoused the king of Navarre, a Huguenot; so that between them both I knew nothing of the coming enterprise." Marguerite states that she was sitting by her sister Claude, who on that evening seemed pensive and sorrowful, when Catherine imperiously desired her to go to bed. The queen rose and

[1] Registres du Bureau de la Ville de Paris: Archives du Royaume de France.

[2] Relation du massacre: Mém. de Sully.

curtsied to her mother previous to obeying her command, when the duchess of Lorraine started from her chair, and seizing her sister by the arm, exclaimed, "For the love of God, my sister, do not leave us!" Catherine in great displeasure called her daughter Claude, and reprimanded her, forbidding the duchess to reveal anything to her sister. Claude, however, who possessed her mother's fearless spirit, rejoined, "that it was a shame to send Marguerite to be sacrificed; for that if anything was discovered, they would be sure to avenge themselves upon her!" Catherine authoritatively replied, "That if it pleased God, no harm would befall the queen of Navarre; but that, whatever might be the cost, it was her will that her daughter should repair to her own apartments, lest her absence might kindle suspicion." The duchess Claude then tenderly embraced her sister and bade her good-night, weeping, "And as for me," says Marguerite, "I departed petrified with alarm, not knowing to what they alluded, or what I had reason to dread." Marguerite found that the king her husband had retired to bed; his room, however, was filled with Huguenot gentlemen,[1] who were talking of the outrage committed on the person of the admiral; and vowing to address fresh reclamations to the king on the morrow for justice.

The king meanwhile conversed until past eleven in his apartments with the comte de la Rochefoucault, who remained last of all the courtiers. Charles made an ineffectual effort to save the count, to whom he was much attached, by praying him to pass the night in his apartment; La Rochefoucault, however, who had a

[1] Charles and his mother had requested the king of Navarre to gather in the Louvre as many Huguenot lords as possible, because they alleged there would be less danger of tumults in the streets, or of any harm occurring to them.

visit to pay to the dowager-princesse de Condé,[1] jestingly declined the request, and departed to destruction. The last rash defiance committed by the doomed Huguenot faction was perpetrated on this night by Pardaillan Ségur. The baron presented himself to attend the *coucher* of the king. He was refused admittance by the page in waiting at the door of his majesty's chamber. Pardaillan, without further parley, collared the page, and proceeded to inflict a sound castigation; when the noise brought one of the chamberlains, who by the command of Charles pacified the choleric baron by giving him admission to the presence of the king.[2]

For two hours all was silent within the precincts of the Louvre. At midnight the first scene of the horrible drama commenced. Catherine rose from her couch and attended by one lady, the duchesse de Nemours, she descended to the chamber of the king.[3] Charles had risen, and was pacing the apartments in agitation, at times vowing to rouse the Huguenot chivalry to the rescue of their lives and of their king; at others, reviling his mother and his brother; then again breaking forth into fearful imprecations against the admiral and his colleagues, disturbers of the peace of his realm. A little apart stood the duc d'Anjou, and behind him were assembled the ducs de Guise, de Nevers, the lord-keeper Birague, the maréchal de Tavannes, and Gondy comte de Retz.[4] These noblemen had previously assembled in the apartments of Monsieur, and were by him conducted to the royal cabinet. Catherine appeared—firm, unshaken, deli-

[1] Françoise d'Orléans, widow of Louis prince de Condé, killed at Jarnac.

[2] Mém. du Sieur de Mergey—De Tavannes; De Thou.

[3] D'Aubigné: Hist. Universelle, tome ii. liv. 1.—Relation du Massacre.

[4] Ibid.

berate; unfalteringly she urged the measure previously resolved upon, and to recoil from which she declared would be fatal to the royal authority. "The proscription of these rebels, Monseigneur, will be your salvation! Is it not righteous to sever these corrupt members from amongst the faithful of the church—the bride of Christ?"[1] Transported by the excitement of the hour, the queen concluded her harangue by quoting, in her native Italian, the words of a renowned preacher of the day.[2] "Si, Si!" exclaimed she, "la pièta lor ser crudele—la crudeltà lor ser pièтosa!" Again, therefore, was the assent of the unfortunate Charles extorted to any measure deemed indispensable by the council. Lest the king should again relent, the final arrangements were soon completed. The conduct of the massacre was given to the duc de Guise, the duc d'Aumale, and the chevalier d'Angoulême.[3] During the interval, after the *coucher* of the queen, the duc de Guise had repaired to the Hôtel de Ville, and explained the nature of the service required from them to the city bands and men at arms. The signal for the onslaught was to be the tolling of the bell of the Palais de Justice; and the sign by which the orthodox servants of the king were to be distinguished, was a white scarf tied round the left arm and a white cross on the hat. The duc d'Anjou, as lieutenant-general of the realm, was nominated to take the supreme command of the royal troops. As for the duc de Nevers, the queen signified her desire that he should remain with his

[1] D'Aubigné: L'Histoire des Cinq Rois. Capilupi: Stratagême du Roy Charles IX. contre les Rebelles.

[2] Cornelio Musso, Bishop of Bitonto.

[3] Henri d'Angoulême, grand prior of France, governor of Provence, and admiral of France, illegitimate son of Henry II. by Mary Levistone, one of the Scotch ladies in the train of Mary Stuart.

majesty in the palace. Between the hours of one and two in the morning the duc de Guise, followed by two companies of arquebusiers, by several of the royal guards, and by the entire bodyguard of the duc d'Anjou, left the Louvre, and cautiously proceeded to the rue de Bethizy, there to await the appointed signal—the ringing of the tocsin—for the onslaught.[1]

The façade of the Louvre, which glowed with brilliant lights, the unusual passing to and fro in the streets of royal messengers carrying flambeaux, and the clash of arms, speedily roused suspicion. A few individuals accosted the sentinels posted at the Louvre, and demanded the cause of the stir. From words they came to blows—the fray increased, and the gathering multitudes in front of the palace warned Catherine that her enterprise, to be successful, must not longer be delayed. By the queen's command the tocsin was rung from the neighbouring church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. As soon as the signal was heard, the Hôtel de Ville and the public edifices and many private houses blazed with innumerable lights. Men clad in the livery of the city traversed the streets, carrying cresset-lights in lanterns at the end of long poles. Bands of soldiery poured into the streets, and mingled with the rabble which on the unwonted sound issued from every part of the city.[2]

As soon as the bell of St. Germain gave forth its hoarse summons, Cosseins posted six or seven arquebusiers beneath each window of the admiral's abode, so that none of the victims might escape. He then knocked at the door and demanded admission in the name of the king. An officer of the name of Labonne opened the door, and was immediately slain. The

[1] Mém. de l'Etat sous Charles IX.—De Tavannes.
[2] Ibid. Capilupi. Registres du Bureau de Paris.

assassins rushed in, headed by Cosseins, and breaking through a door at the foot of the staircase they ascended to the chamber of the admiral. Coligny, meanwhile, roused by the hootings in the streets and the clatter of horsemen, prepared for his fate.[1] In the chamber with him were the minister Merlin de Vaulx, Ambrose Paré —who alone escaped the coming slaughter—and several other Huguenot gentlemen. The admiral rose, and calmly commending himself to God, requested Merlin to pray. Paré, meantime, quitted the room to inquire into the cause of the tumult. He returned in a few seconds. Approaching the admiral, Paré said, "Monseigneur, God summons us to his holy rest: the house is forced, and alas! we have no means of resistance!" Coligny replied, "I know it: I am ready to die: but you others escape for your lives." The noise of the assailants approaching, all the personages round the admiral, excepting Paré, Merlin, and a faithful German servant named Nicholas Muss, fled to the attics of the house, where in the darkness many succeeded in escaping by a window opening on to the roof. A brief interval of suspense ensued, when the door of the chamber was dashed in, and Cosseins appeared, followed by Besme, a German in the service of the duc de Guise, by Atin, a domestic in the employ of the duc d'Aumale, and by two fierce Basque captains, Sarlaboux and Goas. These persons were accompanied by a small party of the Swiss guards of the duc d'Anjou, who wore their master's colours, white, black, and green. Besme approached, and resting the point of his naked sword on Coligny's breast he asked, "Art thou the admiral?"

[1] The admiral believed that the duc de Guise sought his life, and commanded his valet to ascend to the roof of the house and call the guard given him by the king.

"I am," replied Coligny with dignity; "young man, you ought to have respected my age and my infirmity; but you shorten my life only by a few days or hours!" Besme then plunged his sword into Coligny's body, exclaiming, "Traitor! this for the blood of my late lord and master Guise, whom thou didst so perfidiously slay! Die!" Sarlaboux next struck him a blow on the head with his sword, when Besme repeating his thrust, Coligny fell at the feet of his murderers. The voice of the duc de Guise was now heard from below, asking if the deed were done. On being answered in the affirmative, he replied, "M. le chevalier cannot believe it: throw the body out of the window!" Sarlaboux then raised the mangled body in his arms and hurled it into the courtyard. Life was not then quite extinct; and Coligny, it is recorded, made a faint effort to cling to the sides of the window. Guise approached the body of his prostrate foe, and gazed upon it for some moments in silence: he then stooped and with a handkerchief wiped the blood from the face. "Yes; it is he! I recognise him well!" exclaimed the duke; "long live the king! Courage, soldiers! We have made a good beginning;—forwards! the king commands it!"[1]. The duke then kicking the body from his path, mounted his horse and rode towards the scene of carnage perpetrating throughout the length of the rue de Bethizy, where Caumont, Francour, Montamar, Rouvrey, and others were falling under the steel of the assassin. Paré, the skilled surgeon, was alone conducted to the

[1] Mém. de l'Etat de France. Bouchet: Hist. de la Maison de Coligny, liv. v. Davila: Hist. des Guerres civiles de France, tome i. liv. v. Mém. de Tavannes. La Popelinière, fol. 67. De Thou: Histoire de son Temps. Brantôme. Mathieu: Vie de Charles IX. Mezeray. Capilupi: Strategême de Charles IX. Etoile: Mém. l'Histoire de France. Licques: Hist. de la Vie de du Plessis Mornay, liv. i. p. 19.

Louvre in safety by a party of the archers of the duc d'Anjou.

As soon as daylight dawned, which was about half-past two in the morning, Charles, Catherine de Medici, and the duc d'Anjou, attended by the duc de Nevers and de Retz, repaired to a chamber over the grand portico of the Louvre,[1] adjacent to the tennis-court, and which overlooked the lower *cour* of the palace. The courage of Catherine had not wavered; and her exhortations repressed the misgivings which crowded now at the last moment on the minds of her sons. The first indications which their majesties heard of the coming fray was the sound of a pistol-shot mingled with screams and the clashing of weapons. The echo of that report vibrated on the hearts of Catherine and her son. "The sound," says M. d'Anjou, "produced such an effect upon the mind of the queen my mother, the king, and myself, that it seemed to deprive us of judgment." The confusion in the neighbourhood of the palace increased; while the distant clamour of multitudes, intent on their murderous mission, smote on the ear of the royal listeners. At a quarter to three, the hour originally fixed for the commencement of the slaughter, the great bell of the Palais added its clangour to the uproar without; while the occasional discharge of musketry in the court below the chamber in which the king sat, and the noise and cries in the corridors of the palace, told of the fall of some of the most valiant of the Huguenot chivalry of the household of the king of Navarre. Then alone did terror, and perhaps remorse, strike the hitherto unrelenting heart of the

[1] Some chroniclers state that it was from the window of the gallery of the hôtel de Bourbon that Charles watched the massacre. The duc d'Anjou, however, attests that it was at a window of the Louvre that the royal party stood.

queen. By her command the duc de Nevers despatched one of his gentlemen to the duc de Guise, the bearer of stringent directions from their majesties to stop the slaughter, and to retire to his hôtel—and, above all, not to approach the abode of the admiral. "This command," writes Monsieur, "contravened all that we had before ordered, because it had been determined that no person (of the Huguenots) should be molested until M. l'amiral were dead." The duc de Guise, however, sent word back in reply that their majesties' command came too late, for that the admiral was dead, and the enterprise on the other enemies of his majesty far advanced.[1]

The horrid sounds of conflict, therefore, soon echoed from every quarter of the city. In the Louvre itself, under the very eyes of the king, the comte de Montauban, Pardaillan Ségur, Saint Martin, Pilles, Soubise, and a gentleman of the name of Bourse, were deliberately slaughtered—some by pistol-shots, others being killed by "powerful stabs with daggers and poniards." Presently the door of the chamber in which the king sat was thrown open, and M. de Nancy, captain of the guards, entered, escorting the king of Navarre and the prince de Condé. The noise and the excitement had been gradually raising one of Charles's fits of fury. The sight of the prisoners increased the king's exasperation; especially when the king of Navarre boldly reproached him for his want of faith; and represented, in reply to Charles's peremptory order that he should change his creed, how impossible it would be for him to abjure the religion in which he had been nurtured. The young prince of Condé, while declining to renounce his faith, added that he could not believe that his majesty, after having so solemnly plighted his word for the safety of the Huguenots while in his capital, could

[1] Discours de Henri III. sur les Causes de la St. Barthélemy. Mém. de Tavannes, chap. xxvii.

have broken his faith. "As for my religion, Monseigneur, it is my intention, with the aid of God, to remain firm in my profession." The king retorted by calling the prince a rebel, son of a rebel; and with terrible oaths vowed, if at the end of three days Condé still refused to make his abjuration, that he should lose his head.[1] The duc d'Alençon, meanwhile, silently entered the apartment, and sat apart, demonstrating the greatest fear and anguish. The duke was humane and timid in disposition, and inclined towards the Huguenot cause from his political alliance with the house of Montmorency. Few would then have predicted, as they gazed on the despairing gestures of M. d'Alençon, and the tears which suffused his eyes, that he was hereafter to be the chief agent in extorting the first atonement for the cruel tragedy enacting; and that his sword should win the reversal of Coligny's attainder, and that of his personal followers, the survivors of the massacre. Catherine, who had recovered her wonted calmness, approached and severely reprimanded her son d'Alençon for the weakness which he displayed; and she at length sternly told him, that if he stirred or acted in any matter contrary to the designs of the government, she, having already hazarded so much, would cause him to be thrown into the Seine.[2]

The queen of Navarre, meanwhile, had not escaped unscathed from the perils to which her mother had so deliberately consigned her. She relates, that her husband the king of Navarre rose at daylight to continue a game of tennis with his gentlemen before the *lever* of the king. Marguerite then, who had passed a restless

[1] Mém. de l'Etat de France sous Charles IX., tome i. fol. 210.

[2] Le Tocsain contre les Massacreurs—Adressé à tous les Princes Chrestiens—A Reims, 1579. "On dit que le duc d'Alençon fut fort faché de telles cruautés, et qu'il en pleura, dont le roy, et la reyne-mère le tancèrent assez aigrement."—Mém. de l'Etat de France.

night, ordered her nurse to draw the curtains of her bed that she might try to sleep. Her repose lasted about the space of an hour, when she was aroused by a violent knocking at the door of the ante-chamber of her apartment, and some one crying out "Navarre! Navarre!" Marguérite's waiting-woman, concluding the intruder to be the king of Navarre, immediately opened the door; when to her dismay a gentleman severely wounded rushed into the room, followed by four archers of the guard. The wounded man threw himself upon the queen's bed, and clasped her tightly in his arms. "I knew not at first," writes Marguerite, "whether it was he or I whom the soldiers wished to kill, and in great terror I threw myself out of bed on the floor, he continuing to grasp me round the body. At last, by the mercy of God, M. de Nancy, captain of the guards, entered the apartment; and though he commiserated my position, yet he could not refrain from laughing. He reprimanded the archers for their violence, and made them leave the apartment; and granted me the life of the poor man, who still clung to me. My dress was covered with blood—and whilst I changed it for a *manteau de nuit*, M. de Nancy related to me all that had happened, and assured me that my husband was safe with the king. He then conducted me to the room of my sister madame de Lorraine, where I arrived more dead than alive. As I entered the antechamber, the doors of which I found wide open, a gentleman named Bourse, running from the soldiers who pursued him, was pierced by a halbert three paces from me. I fell, almost fainting, into the arms of M. de Nancy, and afterwards entered in safety the little cabinet where my sister slept."

At the sounding of the tocsin of the Palais the subordinate agents in the massacre had commenced their appointed operations—the slaughter of the chieftains.

The mob, however, soon grew impatient: infuriated by the carnage around, the populace fell upon the unfortunate Huguenots, and murdered and plundered with indiscriminate rage.[1] The houses in the fauxbourg St. Germain, where many of the Calvinist leaders resided, were gutted, and every inhabitant slain, whether professing the reformed or the orthodox creed. Téligny met his death from a party of the bodyguard of the duc d'Anjou. The brave marquis de Renel was assassinated by his cousin Bussy d'Amboise, the favourite of M. d'Alençon. The comte de la Rochefoucault fell by the hand of a menial in the household of Monsieur. The maréchal de Biron, though orthodox in his faith, had been doomed by his enemies to perish. On the commencement of the tumult, however, Biron retired to the arsenal, and, as grand-master of artillery, he threatened to turn its cannon on any mob of assailants. The comte de Montgomery, by rare good fortune, managed to escape. The scenes in the streets of Paris on this Sabbath of terror are graphically described by a historian,[2] contemporary with the event. "Behold, then," says he, "this great city, in the which there were nearly sixty thousand men, armed with pistols, cutlasses, pikes, poniards, knives, and other weapons, perambulating the streets, blaspheming and sacking houses, in which they cruelly massacred all whom they met, without respect to sex, age, or condition. The streets were strewn with fragments of corpses; and the doors and thresholds of the houses, palaces, and public edifices were

[1] The maréchal de Tavannes rode through the streets urging the excited people to commit atrocious deeds of violence. "Bleed! Bleed!" exclaimed this zealot, "Bleeding is as good in the month of August as in the month of May!" Tavannes it was who gave the wary counsel to the queen on no account to begin the slaughter until daylight, lest any of the victims might escape in the dark. Catherine's neglect of this advice proved the salvation of many a brave captain.

[2] Histoire des Cinq Rois—De Serres, pp. 433, 434.

stained with gore. A horrible tempest raged of yells and shouts, mingling with the report of pistols, arquebuses, and the pitiable shrieks of the victims. The bodies of the dead were hurled from the windows of their abodes and dragged along the gutters amid strange hissings and shrieks. The windows were smashed in with hatchets and stones; the houses rifled. Carts traversed the streets, sometimes filled with rich booty, at others laden with mutilated bodies, which were cast into the Seine. Blood inundated the streets of Paris, and flowed even within the royal palace."

Throughout the night Catherine and her two sons kept fearful vigil in the chamber over the portico of the Louvre. Monsieur seems not to have attempted a sortie in the streets despite his previous boasting. About seven o'clock on Sunday morning, August 24th, the attention of the king was attracted, it is said, by a crowd of rabble and soldiers, shouting, throwing stones, and apparently in pursuit of persons flying for their lives and making for the river. Looking out, the king recognised the pursued to be Montgomery, the vidame de Chartres, and another cavalier. The sight of the chase inflamed the sanguinary temperament of Charles. Seizing a weapon, he rushed to the window, and firing upon the fugitives, exclaimed, in a voice hoarse with fury, "Tirons! Mon Dieu, ils s'enfuyent!"[1]

In the mêlée, meanwhile, many eminent Catholic

[1] Mém. de l'Etat de France, tome i. Brantôme—who at the same time while recounting the anecdote throws suspicion on its authenticity, by expressing doubts whether the fugitives were within aim of the king's arquebuse—which they were not if Charles occupied an apartment in the Louvre, from whence he viewed the tumult. It is to be noted that no Roman Catholic historian records this fact—in the Protestant authors is it alone to be found. M. de Thou even refrains from adopting it, though so favourably inclined towards the Reformers of his century.

subjects of the king perished: some through the treacherous vengeance of their enemies, others by accident. Amongst the slain were de Lomenie, one of the under secretaries of state, and the canon de Villemur, from whose house Moureval, the intended assassin of Coligny, had taken his aim.

The slaughter continued during the greater portion of the following day, Monday, August 25th. The same day fresh letters were despatched by couriers to the governors of the provinces, containing a relation of the massacre, which Catherine and the king therein represented as a political proscription alone, his majesty commanding a second time that his edicts of pacification should be observed. There are historians, however, who declare that to these pacific missives others were added, in which with execrable perfidy the council commanded that, as soon as the Huguenot populations of the provinces were somewhat reassured and off their guard by the publication of the lenient edicts subjoined, a massacre should be perpetrated, after the model of "Les Matinées de Paris." No documents exist, however, to that effect; and as it is impossible to verify this statement, it can only be accepted as a surmise. Nevertheless, the extent and virulence of the popular commotions which succeeded, if not in some way eventually sanctioned by royal mandate, testify that the authority of the king was little respected or dominant over the most flourishing towns of his realm.

Not one of these slaughters, however, took place simultaneously, which probably would have been the case in a premeditated and well-organized design, having the sovereign for its promoter. Thus, the massacre of Meaux was on the 25th of August; that at Orléans on the 27th; at Lyons on the 30th. The massacre at Bordeaux happened on the 3rd of the ensuing month of October.

The maréchal de Montluc, governor of Guienne, a province notoriously the chief resort of the Huguenots from its vicinity to Béarn, an officer peculiarly favoured with the confidence of Catherine de Medici, and distinguished for his zeal in matters of religion, distinctly states that no orders for the extermination of the Huguenots were forwarded to him. Montluc would have been the first to exult in such a mission: instead of which he says, "All the world here was astonished beyond measure at hearing of what had happened in Paris; the Huguenots most of all, who could scarcely find space enough to fly: they for the most part found refuge in Béarn. I did them not the least harm, though in other places, and by others, they were evilly treated." "If all the governors of the provinces," says the abbé de Caveirac, "received orders to exterminate the Calvinists, Montluc, so trusted by the queen, must have had missives to the same purport. Why, then, if he resisted such mandates, has his name not been recorded by the Calvinist writers, with those of other officers, who are said to have refused to execute the orders sent to them?" The most convincing proof, however, that Montluc never had such commands, is his own simple assertion. Certainly, if the vicomte d'Ortez, governor of the neighbouring town of Aix, received, as it is alleged, instructions to slay the Huguenots of his district, Montluc, the zealous, orthodox, and obedient lieutenant-in-chief of the king, would not have been ignorant of such commands, or exempted from like service.

The letter, moreover, so frequently quoted, assumed to have been addressed by Catherine to Strozzi, and delivered to the marshal two months before the actual perpetration of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's-day, is apocryphal. Strozzi, it is related, was only to break

the seal of the mysterious missive on the 24th of August; while it was placed in his hands two months previously, before his departure for the camp in the pays d'Aunis.

"Strozzi!" the queen is made to write, "this is to admonish you that to-day the admiral and all the Huguenots in this place are killed. See that you diligently render yourself master of La Rochelle; and do to all the Huguenots who fall into your hands as we have done to these. Fail not, as you fear to displease the king M. mon fils, and me.—CATHERINE."

No contemporary French historian records this letter; and it is needless to add that the original document is not to be found. Brantôme, even, who was at Brouage with Strozzi at the time he is said to have opened the queen's letter, is silent; and so remarkable an incident was not likely to escape the pen of a writer minute as is the gossiping abbé, and so great a lover of the marvellous. Even the veracious de Thou says nothing respecting an epistle, which if genuine would have settled the disputed question relative to the tragedy of the 24th of August. The letter was first published by a Calvinist author in an anonymous work printed in 1576. Without much strain of imagination, however, Catherine might have been supposed capable of writing so bloody a mandate to her relation Strozzi on the day following the massacre of Paris, while the cry of "Blood! Blood!" still echoed in the streets of the capital. But to believe that the queen would have compromised herself by placing so dangerous a document in the hands of Strozzi two months before the intended execution of the plot, denotes little knowledge of the astute sagacity of Catherine's political deportment. It is not credible, moreover, that the queen could have predicted with certainty the very day for

the execution of an enterprise which a thousand accidents might have frustrated; and if so frustrated, Strozzi had in his power a document which indelibly would have compromised the queen—besides plunging the realm of France into a fourth civil contest.

The king, the queen, and Monsieur meantime made a progress through the blood-stained city on the evening of the 25th, and were received with acclamations by the orthodox. The king of Navarre and the prince de Condé were strictly confined to their apartments within the Louvre. The princes were not suffered to communicate with each other; but Charles allowed access to their chambers to queen Marguerite, that her beauty might aid in seducing her husband from his faith; to the duc d'Anjou, the ducs de Nevers and de Montpensier—who were all exhorted to undertake a conversion so glorious and beneficial both to the personages concerned and to the realm.

On the following Tuesday the king went in state to the Palais, after attending high mass.[1] He was received by all the members of the parliament of Paris assembled in la Chambre Dorée. Monsieur accompanied his majesty. The king pronounced an oration, in which he avowed that the massacre was perpetrated with his sanction and participation: he then detailed his grievances against Coligny and the Calvinists of his realm, and declared, amongst other accusations, that it had been the traitorous design of the admiral to commit regicide in order to place Condé on the throne of the Valois. The first president of the parliament of Paris, de Thou, returned thanks to his majesty in an harangue of great

[1] The king went first to visit the miraculous thorn-bush growing in the cimetière des Innocents, which on the night of the 25th of August budded and blossomed. Guards were placed to protect this flowering bush from the fervour of the populace, or rather to conceal the fraud practised.

learning and eloquence. "Sire," said this astute magistrate, "he who knows not how to dissimulate is incapable of reigning."[1] The son of the first president, the famous historian, however, vindicates the memory of his father from this imputation of pandering to the treachery of the court; and declares that the latter never spoke of the massacre but with horror and loathing, applying to it the lines of Statius:—

> Excidat illa dies,—ne postera credent
> Secula: nos certe taceamus, et obruta multâ
> Nocte tegi nostræ patiamur crimina gentis.

A medal was, moreover, ordered to be struck to commemorate the event, upon which was the legend: *Charles IX. Dompteur des Rebelles, le 24 Aoust*, 1572. On the reverse was a figure of Hercules clad with the skin of the Nemean lion. This medal was publicly presented to the king by Favier, master of the mint, a few weeks subsequently.[2]

Coligny's papers, meanwhile, had been seized and submitted to the council. These documents certainly revealed projects subversive of the authority and prerogatives of the crown. The admiral, it appeared, had divided the realm into governments, over which he arrogated to himself the privilege of nominating a military chief; whose charge it was to watch the interests of the reformed faith, and to keep all things in readiness, if need be, for an appeal to arms. He had also levied moneys from the king's lieges for the payment of the German troopers upon his own responsibility; having by so doing infringed on the peculiar prerogative of the monarch. But the discovery which appeared to be most threatening in the eyes of the

[1] La Popelinière, tome ii. fol. 67, verso. Mathieu.

[2] Pierre de l'Etoile—Journal de Henri III. Mém. de l'Etat de France.

queen and of M. d'Anjou, was the fact that Coligny had recently sent mandates to his adherents to gather in great numbers in arms by the third day of September at Melun, when the court was expected to proceed to Fontainebleau.[1] A copy of the admiral's will was found deposited with his political papers. In this document Coligny admonished the king to beware of increasing the power of his brothers, by giving them unusual privileges or large appanages. Catherine, as this article was read, turned towards M. d'Alençon, who was present at the council board, and ironically remarked, "Hear your good friend the admiral, whom you loved and so greatly respected!"—"Madame," firmly responded the young prince, "I know not in what degree M. l'amiral bore me friendship; but I do know that in this counsel he proved himself a true friend to the king!"[2]

These various papers were laid by command of the king before the parliament of Paris. That august body then proceeded to pronounce sentence of attainder and degradation from their dignities, honours, offices, and fiefs on all of the race of Coligny. The mutilated remains of the admiral were condemned to exposure on the gibbet at Montfauçon—a decree executed with every additional outrage and indignity which vengeance could prompt.[3] The beautiful castle of Châtillon-sur-Loire, the favourite abode of Coligny, was nearly razed to the

[1] Pierre de l'Etoile—Journal de Henri III. Mém. de l'Etat de France.

[2] Hist. de la Maison de Coligny, par du Bouchet, liv. ii.

[3] Arrêts et Déclarations du Roy: Du Bouchet, tome ii. Registres du Parlement de Paris. These decrees were rescinded after the peace of 1576 and 1577. During the reign of Henri IV. he addressed a mandate to the parliament, commanding the chambers "qu'on eust à mettre hors du greffe, et rayer toutes les procédures, arrêts, et jugements, donnez contre le sieur-amiral." This order was obeyed August 22, 1599.

ground; while an annual thanksgiving was appointed in commemoration of the happy escape of the king and the realm from the admiral's most detestable conspiracy.

No sooner was this edict registered than an order was sent for the arrest of madame de Coligny and the admiral's children; but Coligny's widow and his elder son, with madame de Téligny, had succeeded in escaping over the frontier to Geneva.[1]

The next proceeding of the queen and her sons—who in the *rôle* which they had prescribed to themselves to vindicate their recent measures in the eyes of their subjects and of foreign potentates, seem to have discarded every humane impulse—was to order a grand progress to Montfauçon, to view the mangled remains of their late foe. No movement of compassion for the fate of the great general, the victor of so many fields, smote on the heart of Charles and his courtiers. The duc de Nevers, who turned with loathing from the sight of the headless trunk suspended by the feet from the gibbet, side by side with the mouldering remains of the vilest malefactors, remarked that the air was offensive, and prayed his majesty to retire. "The body of a dead enemy smells sweet," rejoined Charles, quoting the words of the emperor Vitellius when on the plains of Cremona.[2] Coligny's head, after

[1] Aubigné: Hist. Universelle. Du Bouchet: Hist. de la Maison de Coligny. In the privy purse accounts of Charles IX. is an entry for the payment of the sum of 250 livres Tournois to the capitaine d'Aucligny, who was sent to Châtillon-sur-Loire to seize the effects of the admiral—en date 15 Octobre, 1572. Comptes des Dépenses de Charles IX. Archives du Royaume.

[2] Mezeray: The savage mob lighted a fire beneath the admiral's remains as they hung from the gibbet. The maréchal de Montmorency caused the body of Coligny to be taken down during the night, and surreptitiously conveyed to Chantilly, where he gave it burial. The remains were afterwards removed to the burial-place of the Colignis at Châtillon. In 1786 the coffin of Coligny was transported to another tomb at Maupertuis, where a magnificent monument was erected

his assassination, had been severed by a Mantuan in the service of the duc de Nevers, and sent to the Louvre, a horrible offering to the queen-mother. For upwards of two centuries it was believed that the head had been embalmed and presented, some said, to the pope, others to Philip II., king of Spain.[1] The abbé de Caveirac, however, states that in the leaden coffin in the church at Châtillon, which contained the remains of Coligny, he saw portions of the skull and other bones appertaining to the head of the admiral.

The ducs de Guise and d'Aumale during these transactions had retired from Paris, until they discovered that their absence gave confirmation to the notion, at first everywhere prevalent, that the massacre was the result of the ancient feud between Lorraine and Châtillon; and that they alone were the instigators of the primary outrage on the admiral. This version of the affair was agreeable to Charles and his mother; in the first despatches written by the king to his municipalities and governors of provinces, Charles actually threw the odium of the catastrophe on the Guises. When the tidings reached Paris of the tragedies in the provinces, the duc de Guise, overwhelmed at the weight of the charges preferred against the house of Lorraine, returned to the capital and besought the king to vindicate the princes of Guise in the sight of the people; "for," argued the duke, "if your majesty shrinks from

to his memory. At the great revolution this monument was placed in the Musée des Monuments François, Paris.

[1] A letter is extant addressed by Mandelot, governor of Lyons, to Charles IX., promising to obey with the utmost vigilance the orders of his majesty, who commanded that the courier said to be conveying the head of Coligny to Rome should be arrested, and the head of the admiral detained if found in his charge. Mandelot stated also that Paule, a gentleman in the service of the duc de Guise, passed through Lyons on his way to Rome four hours before the reception of his majesty's letter.—Bibl. Imp. MSS. Lancelot.

the responsibility, having the good of this great realm as an apology, reflect how overpowering such a charge must needs be to us!"[1]—"The said sieurs de Guise," writes de Tavannes, "being cunning and very subtle, publicly denied the share attributed to them in the massacre." At any rate the duke's remonstrances proved effectual; and Charles in the presence of his parliament acknowledged that the Guises were the instruments alone in his chastisement of his rebel subjects, and not the originators of the massacre of Paris.

The conversion of the king of Navarre and Condé during the interval which the king had assigned for their instruction in the true faith, was far as ever from being achieved. The noble personages to whom the mission had been intrusted, in vain sought to subdue the contumacy of their intended proselytes by exhortations, in which the temporal welfare of the princes was somewhat ludicrously mingled with their eternal interests. The king of Navarre, joyous and good-tempered, jested, and feigned indifference to the tenets of either of the creeds; but while ridiculing the asceticisms of the reformed confession of faith, he studiously

[1] The house of Montmorency was arming to avenge the slaughter of its kinsman the admiral, should it appear that the horrid massacre had been executed against the will of the king by the queen-mother and the duc de Guise. "Si le Roi disoit ce massacre avoir été fait sans son commandement, M. le maréchal avoit résolu de s'employer, et tous ses amis pour s'en venger." On the 26th day of August, however, Charles sent M. de Fontaines to Chantilly to inform the marshal "que tout ce qui s'étoit passé avait été de son commandement."—Vie de du Plessis, Mornay, liv. i. The duc de Guise, always distrustful of the designs of the queen, believed that she would one day use the odium accruing from the slaughter of the Huguenots to destroy the house of Lorraine, as she had achieved the destruction of that of Châtillon. He, therefore, by mingled threats and public denials of his alleged complicity uttered in the very presence of the court, compelled the king to avow the true share the Guises had taken in the death of Coligny.

refrained from eulogizing the Romish ritual. Henri, however, steadily demonstrated his abhorrence of the acts perpetrated on the fatal eve of the 24th of August. When Charles sent his commands that the king of Navarre should join the court in its procession through the streets of Paris, on the day following the massacre, Henri had the coûrage to refuse. The prince de Condé opened his lips only to give utterance to threats and to denunciations of the impending vengeance of the Most High. Silent and uncommunicative, the prince brooded over the national sin, involving, as it did to him, the loss of his most attached friends and adherents—and abided in daily expectation that the same ruthless hand which had decreed the murder of his father at Jarnac, would likewise be lifted against the son.

One morning early, on the ninth day of September, the king of Navarre and the prince de Condé were summoned into the presence of the king. They found Charles pacing up and down in his cabinet, labouring under fierce excitement. As soon as the king perceived Condé, he advanced furiously upon him, exclaiming, "Messe! Mort! ou Bastille!" The prince made some response, which so irritated his majesty, that he called for arms, and sending for Nancy, captain of his guards, swore with a most terrible oath that unless Condé forthwith uttered his abjuration, par le mort Dieu! he would have his head.[1] The noise of the commotion penetrated to the apartment of the queen, Elizabeth of Austria. Rising precipitately from her toilette, the young queen, with her hair dishevelled over her shoulders, entered the royal cabinet, and throwing herself at her husband's feet, she clasped his hands within her own, and prayed his mercy for a prince his near kinsman. The sight of his weeping wife and the effect

[1] Mezeray. De Thou. Dupleix. Mathieu.

her presence produced upon the stern men who, armed with swords and pikes, now filled the royal closet and its adjacent corridor, dissipated the fury of the king. With gentler mood and accent, therefore, the royal madman commanded the princes to be removed to their own apartment; then raising the queen from her suppliant attitude, he dismissed his guards.[1]

The deepest dejection had preyed on the mind of Elizabeth since the fatal eve of St. Bartholomew's-day. No word of the project had been confided to her ear; and when she rose in the morning and was informed of the "judgment executed on the rebels," her horror was intense. "Hélas!" exclaimed she, "does the king my husband know of this horrid tragedy?"—"Yes, madame," was the reply; "his majesty himself commanded its execution!"—"Oh my God!" exclaimed the queen, in an agony of grief, "what counsellors hast Thou given him?—God! I implore Thee, pardon the king this crime; else, if Thou exactest vengeance, I dread lest this sin may never be forgiven him!"[2] Elizabeth then entered her oratory, and passed the rest of the day in prayer; refusing with great constancy of purpose to join in the procession which, on the temporary cessation of the slaughter, perambulated the reeking streets.

The beautiful bride of Condé, Marie de Clèves, who likewise professed the reformed tenets, had found refuge in the hôtel of her brother-in-law, the duc de Nevers. The consort of the duke, and likewise the duchesse de Guise her sister, had received stringent commands from the queen-mother to procure the abjuration of the wife of Condé. The nuptials of the prince and princess of Condé had been celebrated at the

[1] Capilupi: Le Stratagème de Charles IX. contre les Huguenots, 1574.

[2] Brantôme: Dames Illustres, Vie d'Elisabeth d'Autriche.

château de Blandy[1] ten days before the solemnization of the marriage of the king of Navarre with Marguerite de Valois. Marie was idolized by her husband, over whom her *piquante* animation of manner exercised great fascination. Amongst the most assiduous expectants of Marie's conversion was the duc d'Anjou. So deeply had Monsieur this at heart, that the length of his daily visits to the hôtel de Nevers left king Charles and the queen-mother to settle many of the important complications which arose from the step they had jointly taken, unaided by his advice. As for the religious convictions of the princesse de Condé, they were soon dissipated; and she was quite ready to receive any fresh impressions which it pleased her royal admirer and her potent kindred to suggest. In truth Marie de Clèves had never professed the reformed tenets from sincere conviction of their truth. As early as the year 1569, Jeanne d'Albret wrote, in answer to a prior communication from Marie, to condole with her niece on the unsettled condition of her conscience. The queen of Navarre says, "I feel sorrow to hear that the affairs of your soul progress not so well, as knowing the zeal which you demonstrate in religious matters, I doubt not that it is a very great trouble and unhappiness to you to live thus."[2] The ecclesiastical agents

[1] The château de Blandy, near to Melun, belonged to the marquise de Rothelin, Jacqueline de Rohan, mother of the dowager-princesse de Condé.

[2] MS. Cotton: Vespasian, F iii. fol. 5. See Life of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre. Speaking of the princesse de Condé, who before her marriage bore the title of marquise d'Isle, the queen of Navarre says, in another letter to her son: "My sister the princess (the dowager-princesse de Condé) and my niece are here. I find them both much changed: they have assumed airs which I esteem as extraordinary as they are disagreeable." Again Jeanne d'Albret writes concerning Marie de Clèves: "Your cousin the marchioness is so greatly altered that she exhibits no sign of religion, if it be not that she abstains

employed were the cardinal de Bourbon and an Italian priest, confessor to the duc and duchesse de Nevers. Marie, persuaded by the blandishments of Monsieur, soon declared herself a penitent thirsting for admission into the bosom of holy mother church; at the same time the two young brothers of Condé, the marquis de Conti and the comte de Soissons, were likewise proclaimed converts. The solemn ceremonial of the public abjuration of the princess and her brothers-in-law was fixed for Sunday, September 14th. Marie was conducted to the church of the Augustinians by the duc and duchesse de Nevers and the duchesse de Guise. She was attended by Madame de Dampierre and by three young ladies of her household, who likewise purposed to follow the example of their mistress. The duc d'Anjou and the principal lords of his household were present, and occupied a conspicuous position near the altar. The officiating prelates were the cardinals de Bourbon and de Guise. Marie, in the humble attitude of a suppliant for absolution, knelt on a velvet cushion before the altar between the brothers of Condé. Her youth and tearful loveliness produced a profound impression on the duc d'Anjou. The Italian confessor then approached the princess, and asked whether from her heart she abjured the sect to which she had formerly belonged; and, renouncing all other heresies, professed herself a humble follower of the one holy Roman apostolic faith? Marie replied in the affirmative. The oath of abjuration prescribed by the privy council was then administered by one of the prelates. The cardinal de Bourbon pronounced the absolution, and afterwards Marie partook of the holy Eucharist. A *Te Deum* was chanted, during which the convert and the cortége attending her marched in procession

from attending mass: for in everything else, except that she refrains from this idolatry, she lives like other papists."

through the church and cloisters: afterwards high mass was celebrated.[1]

The fact of his consort's conversion was communicated to the prince de Condé by queen Catherine herself. This information, or some secret matter, perhaps the danger to which his beautiful wife was exposed from the pursuit of Monsieur, imparted by the duc de Nevers, had the effect of subduing the obdurate determination hitherto displayed by Condé to remain faithful to his creed. Accordingly the prince signified his readiness to take the oath of abjuration; and for his better instruction in the Catholic faith he was permitted to retire for a few hours to the monastery of St. Germain des Prez, of which the cardinal de Bourbon his uncle was abbot. The following day Condé made his public recantation, and was received into the Romish communion and restored to liberty by the king.

There now only remained to vanquish the scruples of the king of Navarre to consummate the triumph of the court. Henri still objected, and still declared himself unconverted by the arguments put forth by those appointed to convince him of the insufficiency of the faith for which his mother had fought; and which Coligny had sealed with his blood. Nevertheless, by Friday, September 26th, the constancy of the king of Navarre was vanquished: he wearied of his seclusion, and felt that, as a prisoner in the Louvre, he was powerless to succour his own subjects of Béarn; or to afford aid to the decimated and oppressed Calvinists. The office of receiving into the church the brother-in-law of Charles IX. was assigned to Salviati, the papal nuncio. The ceremony was performed in the chapel of the Louvre, in the presence of the queens, the

[1] Capilupi: Stratagème du Roi Charles IX. Mém. de l'Etat de la France—Mezeray.

duchesse de Lorraine, king Charles, and Monsieur. At the same time the sister of the king of Navarre Catherine de Bourbon, was led to the feet of the legate by her godmother queen Catherine; and after renouncing the errors in which she had been nurtured, the princess with her brother received pontifical absolution and benediction.[1]

There still remained another tragedy to be enacted: one which the queen determined should be sanctioned by the authority of the highest court of the realm, the parliament of Paris. Briquemaut and de Cavagnes,[2] two of the most fervent adherents of Coligny, had been taken prisoners after the eventful 24th of August. Instead of being put to death, they were incarcerated in the Conciergerie. The charge preferred against them was participation in the regicidal projects of the admiral. It is averred, and with truth, that the reason of their detention and temporary escape from the massacre was owing to the anxious desire of the queen that the existence of the alleged treasonable conspiracy should be recognised by the courts, by the institution of a form of process against some of the accused persons; who, moreover, it was hoped might be brought to plead guilty to the charge, either in the torture-chamber or by a fallacious promise of pardon. A commission was appointed by the parliament to try the prisoners; but the judges finding that no positive evidence was produced in confirmation of the charges preferred, decreed their liberation. In violation of all justice the procureur-général appealed against this de-

[1] Capilupi: Stratagème du Roi Charles IX. Mém. de l'Etat de la France—Mezeray.

[2] Briquemaut saved himself on the night of the 24th by taking refuge in the house of the English ambassador. Cavagnes was a master of Requests, and the same chosen by Coligny to be one of the commission appointed to investigate the circumstances of his intended assassination.

cision, and demanded a new trial. A fresh tribunal was therefore nominated, before which de Briquemaut and Cavagnes were led. Catherine and her son d'Anjou were virulent in their persecution of Briquemaut; who during the period of Coligny's ascendency had counselled the king with imprudent zeal to exile his mother, and to provide his enterprising brother with a sceptre. Sentence of death at the stake for the crime of heresy and rebellion was at length pronounced against the prisoners. Their execution was fixed to take place on the 28th of October, the king and his mother intimating their intention of beholding the judicial recognition of the crime of Coligny by being present at the windows of the Hôtel de Ville.

During the night preceding the execution of Briquemaut and his companion in misfortune, the queen Elizabeth of Austria gave birth to a daughter.[1] The sight of his infant child and the supplications of his consort failed to shake the immoveable resolve of the king. The following evening their majesties the king and the queen-mother, accompanied by Monsieur, left the Louvre and repaired to the Hôtel de Ville, where the municipality had provided a magnificent banquet. At ten o'clock the closing scene of the bloody tragedy of Paris was performed. The windows of the great hall overlooking the place de Grève were thrown open, and the royal guests presented themselves to the mob beneath, surrounded by a blaze of torches. The unfortunate prisoners had been meantime drawn on hurdles through the streets and exposed to the ferocity of the excited populace. The piles were lighted, and the victims consumed. The interlude of the execution over, the queen and her two sons returned to

[1] Isabelle de France, born October 27, 1572, baptized February, 1573, queen Elizabeth of England being one of the sponsors; and died in Paris at the Louvre, April 2, 1578.

the banquet-table; and after prolonged revelry, departed for the Louvre.[1]

The total number of the slain from the massacre of St. Bartholomew's-Eve remains to this day a subject of warm discussion. The most extraordinary discrepancy exists on this point amongst historians of the age; and even in the relations of those contemporary with the event. The duc de Sully computes the massacred at 70,000; Péréfixe at 100,000; De Thou states that 20,000 perished; the Calvinists in their martyrology reckon the number at 15,000; while the contemporary chronicler Papyrius Masson, states that 10,000 persons alone were put to death. Amongst these varied assertions probably the latter is the correct computation; for the power in which the Huguenots subsequently rallied proves that their slain could not have exceeded one-third of their aggregate number. In Paris the number of the killed amounted to 2000. A Calvinist writer, La Popelinière, indeed, tells us that 1000 persons alone perished. An entry in the ledgers of the Hôtel de Ville, however, shows that twenty livres each were paid to eight grave-diggers of the cemetery of les Saints Innocents by the provost and sheriffs of Paris for the interment of 1100 corpses, which were buried in the neighbourhoods of St. Cloud, Auteuil, and Chaillot.

At Orleans 1850 persons perished; and at Bordeaux 1000. In both these towns popular fury was especially excited against the Huguenots; and their returns accordingly displayed the highest number slain in the provincial cities and towns.[2]

[1] Mezeray: Mém. de St. Auban. De Thou.

[2] "Ces actes inhumains," says the chivalrous duc de Bouillon, "qui furent suivies par toutes les villes du Royaume, me navra le cœur; et me fit aimer et les personnes et la cause de ceux de la religion, encore que je n'eusse nulle connoissance de leur créance." The duc, Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, vicomte de Turenne, who by his marriage

The intelligence of the means taken by Charles to exterminate his heretic subjects was received by foreign courts with undissembled consternation; though the proscription in itself was hailed by most of the Roman Catholic potentates of Europe. The king of Spain and the court of Rome seem to have applauded without reservation the deeds of king Charles and his mother. The former was harassed by a religious war in the Low Countries, which required the co-operation only of the French Huguenots to be waged successfully; and the latter, the universal father of Christendom, beheld with approbation the extermination of those who refused obedience to the authority of the Holy See; and whose dangerous errors threatened speedily to alienate the fealty of that portion of Europe still free "from the heresies and damnable doctrines of Luther and Calvin."

In Rome the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin was selected for the public thanksgiving and celebration of the church's victory over her Gallic foes. The Pope proceeded to the church of St. Louis, where mass was performed with the utmost pomp. His holiness was attended by the college of cardinals; and the ambassador of the emperor carried the train of the pontifical mantle. The cardinal de Lorraine caused a placard to be affixed to the door of the church, which commenced with these words: "Charles IX., the most Christian king of France, fired with zeal for the cause of the Lord God of Hosts, like an avenging angel divinely commissioned, has taken swift and sudden vengeance on the heretics of his realm—his enemies and those of the holy church, and of his state." The cardinal proceeds to thank the Almighty for this unparalleled deliverance; he con-

with Charlotte, heiress of the potent house of la Marck, became duc de Bouillon and prince de Sédan, was the bosom friend of Henri IV., and became eventually a convert to the reformed tenets.

gratulates the sovereign pontiff on his felicity that so notable an achievement should illustrate his pontificate; and concludes by demanding the prayers and thanksgivings of the faithful.[1]

Very different, however, was the effect produced at Vienna when the tidings were communicated to the benevolent Maximilian II., father of the young queen of France. The emperor officially preserved a marked silence on the event; but in private commented upon it as the most abominable act that could have been committed, and which no danger or provocation justified.

Eighteen months after the massacre the emperor, writing to his friend Lazare Schwend, makes the following comments: "I cannot approve the barbarous and tyrannical manner in which the French treated the admiral and his adherents. My heart is wrung to think that my son-in-law consented to so horrible a massacre. I know, however, that other personages meddle in the government; though this fact cannot excuse him for having sanctioned so infamous an action. Would to God that he had previously consulted me! I never would have assented to so grave a crime. May God pardon its abettors and perpetrators!"[2]

In England the recital caused intense indignation and horror. Queen Elizabeth refused for long to receive the ambassador Salignac de la Mothe Fénélon, commanded by the French court to be apologist of the massacre; and when he was at length admitted to the presence, Elizabeth received him clad in mourning robes.

[1] Evénements de Septembre et Octobre, 1572. Mém. de l'Etat de la France, tome i. A medal was also struck at Rome, bearing the inscription on one side: "UGONOTORUM STRAGES, 1572." And on the other: "GREGORIUS XIII. PONT. MAX. AN. I."

[2] Godest: Constitutions Impériales. Brandt: Hist. de la Reformation des Pays-Bas. The letter is dated Vienne, Février, 1574.

In Germany the irritation was extreme. The Protestant princes formed fresh leagues; and many of them broke off relations with a government so perfidious and sanguinary. The correspondence of the French envoys in Germany is filled, during the few following years, with the detail of slights, public and official; and states the impossibility of transacting diplomatic business with courts and individuals so hostile and distrustful.

In the kingdom of Poland it will presently be seen what influence the massacre of St. Bartholomew produced upon the election of the duc d'Anjou to the crown of that realm.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

1572—1573.

The realm of Poland—The Jagellons—Queen Bona Sforza—Her character—Barbara Radzivill—Her history—She is proclaimed queen of Poland—Ambassage of M. de Balagny—Splendour of the Polish palatines—Candidates for the crown—Death of Sigismund II.—Departure of Balagny from Poland—The princess Anne Jagellon—Interview of the bishop of Valence with Charles IX. and Catherine de Medici—His departure for Poland—Events of his journey—His arrival in Poland—Negotiations—The imperial ambassage—Effects of the massacre of St. Bartholomew—Admirable diplomacy of the bishop of Valence—His labours—Articles of Sandomeir—Their effect upon Montluc—Negotiations—Assemblage of the Polish Diet—Its composition—The ambassadors—Their orations—Harangue of the bishop of Valence—Its triumphant success—Proclamation of the duc d'Anjou as king of Poland—Its subsequent opposition—Dexterity of Montluc—He is compelled to sign the articles of Sandomeir—His letters to the king of Poland and to Catherine de Medici—Sentiments of Henry on his election—Siege of La Rochelle—Overtures made to Henry by the duc de Guise—Their temporary reconciliation—Termination of the campaign—Correspondence between Henry and Catherine—The princesse de Condé—Henry's passionate attachment—Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf—Assault on the hôtel Nantouillet—Arrival of the Polish ambassadors, and of the Papal legate extraordinary.

POLAND, at the period when queen Catherine sought the suffrages of its people for her son the duc d'Anjou, was a realm little known in France. No alliances, political or matrimonial, had brought the countries into relation. At the court of Charles IX. the manners and usages of the Poles were supposed to be barbarous, and their country bleak and impoverished. The

people, it was said, were rude and unlettered, delighting in war and rapine; and treating their elected sovereign with no greater respect than they demonstrated towards one of their own predatory chieftains. The haughty palatines, it was believed, coerced the king; and assuming perfect equality with him, thought it no disloyalty to annul unceremoniously any of his edicts which met with disapproval from the majority of the senate. So little intercourse had hitherto existed between France and Poland, that the bishop of Valence, Jean de Montluc, was the only personage of the court of Charles IX. who had set foot within the realm of the Jagellons. This advantage had naturally contributed to the nomination of the bishop of Valence as ambassador from king Charles; Montluc, moreover, during his sojourn at Warsaw, had been received with distinction by the king Sigismund Augustus II., then prince-royal, who, charmed by the varied acquirements of the learned prelate, had afterwards maintained a correspondence with him.

The family of the Jagellons, grand-dukes of Lithuania, had reigned over Poland for the space of one hundred and fifty-six years. In 1386 Uladislas, duke of Lithuania, was called to the throne of Poland by the diet;[1] and although the crown was deemed elective, the Jagellons, from father to son, each in turn had wielded royal authority. Sigismund I., who died in 1548, was a prince of powerful intellect. He restored the finances of the kingdom, and re-established

[1] On his marriage with the heiress of Poland Hedwige, daughter of Louis I. king of Hungary and Poland, to which latter sovereignty Louis was elected on the decease of his uncle Casimir king of Poland, A.D. 1370. Louis king of Hungary divided his territories between his two daughters Marie and Hedwige. Marie, heiress of Hungary, married the emperor Sigismund I.; Hedwige, Jagellon, the grand-duke of Lithuania, who embraced the Christian religion to espouse her.

the balance of government by repressing the assumptions of the Polish magnates. He defeated the Muscovites under their czar Gregory Dimitrowitz, and drove them from his hereditary duchy of Lithuania. "Sigismund," says a contemporary historian, "was a sage on the throne, a philosopher king, a friend of mankind, a beneficent sovereign, just, and a benefactor of merit, learning, and virtue." In his administration of justice Sigismund I. showed himself to be stern and impartial. His rule was revered by his turbulent subjects, who were held in subjection during his lifetime by the capacity and inflexible energy of their sovereign. With all his admirable qualities, however, Sigismund was intolerant in matters of religion. A faithful son of Rome, he beheld with horror and humiliation the spread of heresy in Germany. In vain the most tempting proposals were made by the chieftains of the Smalkalden league; and subsequently by other Protestant princes, to allure the heroic old monarch to their alliance. Sigismund rejected their importunities, and despatched in his turn ambassadors to remonstrate with these heretic princes on their unhallowed rebellion, which he predicted would eventually ruin and effect the partition of the empire. The conscientious zeal of Sigismund becomes worthy of reverence when he demonstrated his sincerity by the rejection of the crowns of Hungary, Bohemia, and Sweden, successively offered to him, provided he would accept and swear to maintain the reformed ritual. To prevent the seeds of heresy from springing up in his beloved Poland, Sigismund, during the latter years of his life, promulgated two laws of extreme severity against innovators in religion. He decreed that every Polish magnate and gentleman who became a convert to the errors of Luther or Calvin, should be degraded from his hereditary rank and offices, and his estates confiscated.

The second decree ordained that no subject of Poland might send his children to be educated in any town or university of Germany where the fatal germ of heresy had been disclosed,[1]—a law which in fact interdicted the German colleges altogether to the Poles. These ordinances, arbitrary as they were, became for several successive years part of the Polish code; so profound was the veneration of the people for their sovereign. Sigismund died April 1st, 1548, at the age of eighty-two. The last six years of his reign were embittered by domestic feuds. His queen Bona was the only daughter of the unfortunate John Galeazzo Sforza, duke of Milan—poisoned by his uncle Ludovico—by Isabel of Arragon. For some years Bona had been detained a captive by Ludovico, who after the decease of his great nephew Francisco[2] usurped the sceptre of Milan. When the hand of the princess was obtained by the king of Poland, she departed, therefore, lamenting the fair Italian province of which she, the rightful heiress, had been despoiled; and nourishing a bitter sense of injustice and wrong. Bona inherited some of the noble qualities of her great ancestor the constable Sforza. She possessed her mother's beauty of feature and unconquerable pride. The influence of his wife reigned supreme over the mind of Sigismund during the latter years of his reign. She it was who supported the king in his resolute stand against heresy; and received in his stead the remonstrances drawn forth on the first promulgation of his two edicts against heresy. "The king loving his consort too well to risk his conjugal happiness, and knowing that her majesty's temper was naturally imperious and energetic, had allowed her to

[1] Lettre de Clement VII. au Roy Sigismund Auguste I. De Thou, liv. v.

[2] Jean Galeazzo Sforza left two children only, Francisco who for a brief period wore the ducal circlet, and Bona queen of Poland.

interfere occasionally in the government. His age at length induced him to abandon into her hands the entire government of his realm; so that for some years previous to his decease she not only divided sovereign power with him, but often remained absolute mistress in all things."[1] Over her children the queen's dominion was also paramount. Her son Sigismund II., who to the sterling qualities of his Polish ancestors united the refined tastes inherited from his Italian kindred, proved for many years most deferential in his regard towards his mother. During his father's lifetime Sigismund had married Isabella daughter of the emperor Ferdinand I. and niece of Charles V. The young princess was gentle and retiring in disposition; and yielding in all matters to her mother-in-law, she contrived to live in comfort and tranquillity at the court of Warsaw. From her husband, however, Isabel received no support; and when, a few months after his accession to the throne of Poland, she died childless, her loss excited little sensation or regret. The wrongs of the young Isabel, however, were soon to be avenged; and Bona, who had hitherto usurped all the power and pre-eminence conferred by the royal diadem, was in her turn destined to yield before the wit and surpassing beauty of a rival. No sooner were the ceremonies of the coronation over, than queen Bona admonished her son to marry again, that the royal line of Jagellon might rejoice in the birth of a future representative.

In the fêtes which succeeded the accession of Sigismund II. the eyes of the king had been attracted by the extraordinary loveliness of Barbara Radzivill, sister of the palatine of Wilna,[2] and widow of a Lithuanian magnate. The humour and vivacity of this

[1] Varillas: Hist. de l'Hérésie, tome iv.

[2] Nicholas Radzivill, palatine of Wilna, duc d'Olika, grand-marshal of Lithuania.

princess charmed Sigismund; and her accomplishments in dancing and her skill as a poetess rendered her fascinations irresistible. The house of Radzivill was ancient as that of Jagellon, and potent in wealth and valour; and as chieftains of a rank greatly inferior to the palatine of Wilna had been elected to the throne, no objection could have been reasonably made to the elevation thereto of the sister of the latter, if only her repute had been equal to her beauty. After the decease of her husband, Barbara had placed no restraint on her love for dissipation. Her beautiful person was arrayed in modes which shocked the decorum of the grave Polish magnates; while in her house the sounds of revelry were never hushed. Numerous were the scandalous reports current respecting the suitors of the princess, whom she was said to lure and afterwards abandon. When Barbara perceived the influence which she had acquired over the heart of Sigismund, she told his majesty that unless he was prepared to acknowledge her as queen, she would take leave of him and retire from court; for as to a left-handed marriage, she would never assent to such a project. "I would rather," said the princess, "remain a simple palatine, enjoying the wealth and position which is mine by right, than become your majesty's wife, and not be queen!"

The consternation of the queen-mother was unfeigned: she rallied her son on his predilection for a base courtesan, as Bona was pleased to term the princess; she commanded him to seek alliance in some of the royal houses of Germany; and she represented the injustice which such a marriage would inflict on the princesses his sisters—for what foreign potentate would care to ally himself with a family whose chief had so degraded himself? The brothers of the princess and the adherents of the house of Radzivill, on the other hand, intrigued to bring about the marriage. Barbara

herself reproached the king for his submission to the will of his imperious mother: and finally she represented so forcibly the disloyalty of such vacillation towards the woman whom he professed to love, that Sigismund signified his unalterable resolve to espouse the princess and share with her the throne of the Jagellons. Accordingly the ceremony was publicly performed in Cracow at the church of St. Stanislaus, during which the ambitious Barbara wore the royal mantle and the crown of Poland, and was served with the same honours as her predecessor the imperial Isabella.[1]

The queen-dowager and the princesses her daughters thereupon retired to Warsaw, and appealed to the senate to withhold from Barbara Radzivill the dignity, homage, and title of queen of Poland. They deposed that her character was blemished; and her reputation the jest and derision of the young cavaliers of the court. Bona, in support of her petition, appealed to the ancient laws of Poland, which required that the senate should sanction the marriage of the sovereign by a majority of votes; in default of which consent, the wife of the king could not legally entitle herself queen, nor her children acquire a right to the royal succession. The elements of discord being thus sown by the queen-mother, produced results disastrous to the prosperity of the realm. The king deeply resented his mother's conduct, and apparently more attached than ever to his beautiful consort, declared himself ready to stand or to fall by her side. The nobles were divided into factions; some sided with the king, others with his mother, as the personal interest of the moment dictated. The powerful house of Radzivill, however, concentrated its strength to serve the cause of Barbara.

[1] Hist. de Pologne, par Martin Cromer, Evêque de Varna. Regne de Sigismund Auguste II. Starovolscius in Sarmatiæ Bellatoribus, p. 169, et seq.

Amongst its adherents were numbered men eloquent in the senate and influential with the people. When the question came before the senate the king himself condescended to address his nobles. He represented that his consort sprang from the noblest house of Lithuania; that the Polish magnates ought to be regarded as more august than the nobles of any other realm, inasmuch as it was their proud privilege to elect the king; and, therefore, that the king of Poland could not degrade himself by espousing the daughter of one of these electors who had aided in bestowing upon him the royal diadem. The senators applauded their sovereign's deductions; and as most of them had daughters, who themselves at some future time might be placed in the position of Barbara Radzivill, the magnates were reluctant to close against their own posterity the avenue to royal honours. With acclamations, therefore, Barbara was hailed queen of Poland; and the senate, headed by the archbishop of Gnesen, primate of the realm, proceeded to the castle of Cracow to lay the decree at her feet.[1]

For many years Sigismund and his consort lived together in harmony after the departure of the queen-dowager for her own land of Milan. In 1560 queen Barbara died, leaving no child. Sigismund never recovered from the affliction of her loss; and although he took as his third wife Catherine of Austria,[2] sister of his first consort, from that period the cares of government alone occupied his attention. After the death of Catherine in 1572 the princess Anne Jagellon presided over the court; her sisters, notwithstanding the mis-

[1] Cromer: Hist. de Pologne. In gratitude for this decree of the senate, Sigismund repealed his father's edict forbidding the youth of Poland to frequent the German universities.

[2] Catherine, one of the ten daughters of the emperor Ferdinand, was the widow of Francis II. marquis of Mantua, drowned in 1550 while crossing a river in Italy.

alliance contracted by their brother the king, having found suitable alliances.[1]

When M. de Balagny and the members of his suite arrived in Poland, during the spring of the year 1572, the greatest distress reigned throughout the country on account of the ravages of the plague and the hopeless nature of the malady with which Sigismund was then smitten. They found the king about to quit Warsaw to avoid contagion; and feeble as he was, Sigismund persisted in retiring to the castle of Knichin in Lithuania, because the place was endeared to him by memories of his deceased consort queen Barbara, to whom the castle had appertained. The errand of the French envoys excited intense curiosity; but Balagny simply stated that he and his colleagues had brought letters from Charles IX. to king Sigismund to condole with him on his failing health. The ambassadors had journeyed to Cracow, so little did they know of the movements and residences of the Polish court. Everywhere Balagny, as the envoy of the Christian king, was received with courtesies and a hospitality which overwhelmed him with astonishment. After visiting the salt mines of Wieliczka, Balagny proceeded to Knichin. At some distance from this latter place the ambassadors were met by Stanislaus Karnikowski, referendary-general of Poland, and conducted to the royal abode. Sigismund, however, was too ill to see them; his majesty sent word "that if his malady gave him respite he would receive the envoys with all the pleasure in the world, from the respect which he bore their royal master." The king, nevertheless, commended them to

[1] The princess Isabella of Poland married Zapoli vaivode of Transylvania, comte de Scepus and king of Hungary; the princess Hedwige espoused the elector of Brandenburgh Joachim II., who died in 1571, as is supposed; by poison; Katherine Jagellon became the consort of John III. king of Sweden.

the care of the magnates of his court, of whom a larger number than usual had accompanied him to Knichin in expectation of the event of the royal decease. Balagny was therefore entertained by the bishop of Cracow, the palatine of Wratislania, by the grand-marshal of the court of Lithuania, Radzivill, brother of the late queen Barbara, and others. The splendour of the entertainments given by these nobles, whom the envoys had deemed barbarians ignorant of the refinements of civilized life, is often alluded to with wonder. "At one castle," recounts Choisnin, secretary of the ambassage, "we were regaled with five or six kinds of wine, besides Malmsey and Muscadel. Neither do I believe that in any town of France a greater variety of confectionery could have been produced. The stables were full of beautiful horses. There was a grand stand, moreover, shown us, in which we found arms for one hundred men. Few lords even of France, Italy, or Spain could have surpassed this display." Amid these festivities Balagny forgot not the mission on which he was bound, but spread the praises of the duc d'Anjou wherever he went. He lauded the valour and accomplishments of Monsieur; and expatiated on the wealth and power of the realm of France. He sent home minute reports of the condition of the kingdom, and of the disposition shown by each great noble to cultivate the alliance. Amongst other intimations given by Balagny was one especially unpalatable to Monsieur. It was a perpetual grievance to the chivalrous Polish palatines that Sigismund II. had neglected to procure an alliance for his sister Anne. They therefore desired that their future king should espouse the princess, that thus the line of Jagellon in the posterity of Anne might be restored to the throne of Poland. The princess had completed her fortieth year. She was little of stature, and swarthy in complexion. Her eyes were dark, and shadowed by the

heavy brow inherited from her Italian ancestors. Her disposition was grave; and the decorum and dignity of her deportment whilst presiding over her brother's court had greatly enhanced her reputation.

The real nature of the mission of the sieur de Balagny seems not to have been divined, so improbable did it appear that a French prince should covet the sceptre of the distant realm of Poland. The dying moments of Sigismund II. were beset by the intrigues of the ambassadors despatched by the eager aspirants for his crown. Besides the duc d'Anjou, whose pretensions were not at first declared, there were three candidates for the succession. The archduke Ernest,[1] second son of the emperor Maximilian II., was Monsieur's most formidable competitor. The imperial envoy, the abbé Cyre, had during the past six years of his sojourn at Warsaw done all in his power to promote the archduke's election. So unsuspicious was the abbé of the designs of Balagny, that he actually confided his project and the progress he had made for its attainment to the ear of the French envoy. Either the imperial ambassador had yet to acquire the prudence and caution of an able negotiator; or his discernment and subsequent artifices are amongst the finest strokes of diplomacy. The second competitor was Sigismund, son of the king of Sweden and Katherine, sister of the dying king. In the event of his son's elevation, John III. offered to cede important territories in Livonia to the crown of Poland. The third pretender was Iwan Basilowitch, son of the czar of Muscovy, who had already written letters to the principal magnates recommending his son, and adding promises and offers so advantageous "that it seemed such could not be resisted." Amongst

[1] The archduke had not attained his eighteenth year, while Sigismund prince of Sweden was only nine years old. His grandmother Anne was a granddaughter of Casimir king of Poland.

the minor competitors whose claims were abandoned almost as soon as proposed, were Albert duke of Prussia, and Stephen Battory vaivode of Transylvania.[1]

On the seventh day of July Sigismund II. died, after a reign of twenty-four years. The king was deeply regretted by his subjects, who thus beheld the last male scion of a mighty race pass from amongst them. Sigismund, however, never acquired the popularity of his father. His disposition was pacific and retiring; he loved study and the society of his beautiful consort Barbara better than those martial displays so congenial to the warlike tastes of his subjects.[2] The ceremonies of his lying-in-state were performed at Knichin in great pomp; and on the last day of July the body of Sigismund was conveyed to Warsaw, where it remained until the election of his successor, when the royal obsequies were performed in the cathedral of Cracow.

On the termination of the ceremonies connected with the removal of the body of the deceased king, M. de Balagny returned to France to hasten the despatch of the state ambassage under the bishop of Valence. The pretensions of the rival candidates were now openly paraded; and before his departure M. de Balagny thought it more prudent to reveal the secret of his mission to some influential personages, powerful enough to counteract the machinations of the imperial ambassadors in favour of the archduke. Accordingly Balagny confided the formal intentions of the court of France to propose the duc d'Anjou as the successor of Sigismund II. to

[1] Choisnin: Secretaire de Montluc Evêque de Valence, liv. i. De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. liii.

[2] The king's chief interest was concentrated in his magnificent stud of horses, renowned throughout Germany. At his death Sigismund had five thousand horses dispersed about his realm at different establishments. Sigismund also possessed a valuable cabinet of curiosities, gems, cameos, pictures, ivory, and goldsmith's work.

the sons of the chancellor of Poland, Gaspard and Erasmus de Binski, the latter being dean of Cracow. The intelligence met with a favourable reception; the dean of Cracow especially promising to support the election of M. d'Anjou. Balagny then took leave of his friends; and having ably fulfilled his preparatory mission, he proceeded to Poltusk, leaving his secretary Choisnin at Warsaw. Before he quitted Poland Balagny despatched a letter of condolence to the princess Anne: his envoy, M. de Charbonneau, was moreover instructed to ask a private audience of the princess, and to request her highness to favour the cause and the election of the duc d'Anjou. Immediately on the decease of her brother king Sigismund, the princess had been conveyed under the escort of several of the principal magnates of the realm to the castle of Blonie, a few leagues from Warsaw, where she was strictly watched, and no person permitted to communicate with her without the previous sanction of the senate. Soldiers were posted round the castle; and three bishops were selected to act as guardians of the princess, whose duty it was to see her highness at stated times daily; and who were directed to read any written communication addressed to Anne, and to take a copy of such documents for transmission to the senate. These precautions were adopted to secure the person of the princess, lest any foreign prince or Polish magnate might unlawfully attempt to win the contested crown through a marriage with the last of the name of Jagellon. It also secured the neutrality of the princess during the election. Anne received Balagny's letter with great apparent pleasure; but the envoy was not permitted to converse with the princess. Anne courteously sent him word that "she was then under the guardianship of the senate, and could neither see nor converse with any. Nevertheless, had the cir-

cumstances been other than they were, she would have demonstrated in what light she esteemed a subject and servant of king Charles of France!"[1]

Balagny was received with open arms on his arrival in Paris by the king. The reports which he brought of the wealth and splendour of the Polish magnates; and of the flattering reception of the proposal to elect Monsieur given by the few to whom the design had been communicated, appeared in the opinion of the council to afford encouragement for renewed exertions. To Henry and to Catherine alone the prospect appeared repugnant; though such was the evident resolve of king Charles to pursue the election, that neither dared to demonstrate indifference. Montluc was therefore summoned to Blois, and received the king's command to depart on his mission in the presence of the queen-mother, Monsieur, and the amiral de Coligny and other of Charles's counsellors. The queen exhorted Montluc "to exert every resource to procure the election of Monsieur, for that she was still more entirely bent on accomplishing the enterprise than ever!"[2] Had the bishop heeded the significant composure with which Catherine spoke the words decreeing the banishment of her favourite son; or had he noted the eager and haggard features of the king and his attenuated form, which death seemed already to devour, he might more profitably for his future fortunes have worked in the sense opposite to that which her majesty's behest conveyed. Montluc, however, tolerant upon principle and believing that France would gain by the absence of Monsieur, undertook the negotiation with an alacrity which the duc d'Anjou and his mother never forgave. The bishop demanded as his coadjutors in the mission Michel Seurre, a knight of Malta and one of the most

[1] Mém. de Choisnin, liv. i. De Thou. Cromer: Hist. de Pologne.
[2] Mém. de Choisnin, liv. ii.

clever diplomatists of the day, and the sieur de Malloc, an advocate and counsellor of the parliament of Grenoble. He also nominated Guy de St. Gelais baron de Lansac, and Gilles de Noailles; but it was decided that both these noblemen should, after the space of a few weeks, follow the bishop, bringing fresh instructions from their majesties and the duc d'Anjou.

Eight days before the massacre of St. Bartholomew's-Eve the bishop of Valence set out for Poland. Montluc had reached St. Dizier on his road to cross the German frontier at Strasburg when the news was conveyed to him of that catastrophe. He and the members of the embassy incurred the greatest peril at St. Dizier from the rising of the populace of Lorraine; who thought to do the king service by slaying a prelate suspected of favouring Calvinism. Montluc escaped assassination, but was arrested and conveyed a prisoner to Verdun until the court had been appealed to, to decide his fate. The despatch of the bishop detailing the circumstances of his detention, and prudently addressed by him to the king, had no sooner reached Charles's hand than the latter sent off an express, commanding the instant liberation of Montluc; and which conveyed a severe reprimand to the governor of Verdun for daring to molest a prelate bound on his majesty's service. Catherine and the duc d'Anjou also wrote apologetic letters to the bishop, condoling with him on the perils which had hitherto beset his journey: the sincerity of which may, however, be fairly doubted, as it was suspected that Monsieur's extreme disinclination to wear the crown of Poland might have had some influence on the arrest of the ambassador.

The bishop of Valence, therefore, continued his journey, and was joined at Strasburg by Malloc. Chancing to meet in the streets of that city one Bazin, an officer of the royal county of Blois, a personage

endowed with great courage and address, Montluc proposed that he should join his train. On the 6th day of October Montluc arrived at Leipsic: he there heard the news that the Polish diet was to assemble on the 10th day of the same month to settle the method and rule of the future election. He was also informed that the plague raged throughout the Polish dominions, so as to render travelling perilous. Perceiving that no time was to be lost in deliberation, Montluc despatched Bazin and a young Polish student of the university of Paris, whom he had brought in his suite, to the frontiers to collect intelligence of the proceedings of the diet; and to examine into the sanitary condition of the kingdom.

About the 15th of October the bishop of Valence himself arrived at Mezericz, a frontier town of Poland. He was here met by the captain of the district, who gave him courteous welcome and some information concerning the diet. The morning following his arrival Montluc received letters from Bazin apprizing him that the diet had assembled; and that it would be advisable to hasten to Warsaw and open his mission. The politic prelate, however, divined that such a precipitate act would denote little respect for the authority of the magnates in power: and that the most likely way of winning their suffrages would be to ask permission to approach the capital; and meantime to despatch his credentials to the archbishop of Gnesen, primate of Poland, who during the interim presided over the council. The wisdom of Montluc's decision was soon evinced; for a few hours subsequently he received an official document prohibiting him from advancing within fifteen leagues of Warsaw during the present session of the diet, in order to insure the purity of the royal election, and indicating those places where the French ambassador might reside. The bishop,

therefore, made choice of the little town of Konin on the Vistula for his residence; and forthwith despatched Bazin to Warsaw, the bearer of letters to the diet from king Charles, Catherine de Medici, and the duc d'Anjou. He, moreover, wrote in his own name to the diet; besides addressing special missives to the most influential among the senators, setting forth the virtues and princely qualities of the duke; and demonstrating the advantages likely to accrue to Poland when under the sway of a prince of the line of Valois. The tone of these memorials gave great satisfaction to the senate; the modest deportment of the ambassador was commented upon, who, though the envoy of so potent a monarch, yet showed respect for the laws and constitution of the realm to which he was accredited. "Also," relates Choisnin, "the said bishop represented M. d'Anjou as a very paragon of excellence, and greatly to be preferred above his competitors."

The ambassage sent by the emperor Maximilian, meanwhile, arrived in Poland. It consisted of 150 gentlemen, who accompanied Guillaume von Rosenburg, burgrave of Bohemia, ambassador-extraordinary. The state and equipages of the Austrian nobles were sumptuous; they were bountifully supplied with money and with decorations to distribute; while the deportment of the ambassador was independent as if he were traversing a country already obedient to the sway of the archduke. A town was instantly assigned for the residence of the burgrave, where he was requested to sojourn until the period arrived for the great gathering of nobles and people to proceed with the election of the king. He was, moreover, solicited to send his credentials and papers to Warsaw to lay before the diet, as the bishop of Valence had done. Instead, however, of obeying these instructions, von Rosenburg secretly despatched the abbé Cyre to canvass the pala-

tinates, accompanied by an individual named Guastaldo. The ambassador and his train then boldly set out for the castle of Blonie to confer with the princess Anne. This defiance greatly incensed the Polish lords; and orders were despatched to prevent the entrance of the burgrave into the town of Blonie, and still more rigorous rules were promulgated for the safe custody of the princess. A case containing papers and letters meanwhile was seized on the frontier and sent to Warsaw. On examination it proved to belong to some noble of the Austrian ambassage; and within was discovered a letter addressed to the duke of Bavaria, in which the Poles were termed by the writer *gens barbara et gens inepta*.[1] The wrath of the senators was extreme; and it was proposed to dismiss the burgrave of Bohemia without a hearing. The senate, however, out of respect for the imperial dignity, contented itself with sending a strict mandate to the ambassador, commanding him to retire to Plock, or to leave the country. It was further intimated that, unless the abbé Cyre departed from Poland, orders would be sent for his arrest and incarceration until after the election of the king. Still further to demonstrate displeasure against the burgrave, who is, however, described as "a nobleman—wise, modest, gracious, and rich," the senate decreed that two thousand copies of the letter addressed to the diet by the bishop of Valence should be printed and distributed throughout the kingdom. A very gracious message was, likewise, sent to Montluc; accompanied, however, by another order not to quit Konin.

The duc d'Anjou, owing to the imprudence of the imperial ambassador, had clearly gained an advantage over his most dangerous rival. This promise of eventual

[1] Choisnin: Discours de ce qui s'est fait pour l'entière negotiation de l'election du roi de Pologne.

triumph was, however, suddenly dissipated by the news of the massacre of Paris, which elicited a thrill of horror and execration throughout the realm. "In the space of a few days all Poland detested the French name," says a chronicler. The mention of Henry de Valois as a candidate for the sceptre of Poland was greeted by the people of Warsaw with hootings and groans; and placards recounting some of the particulars of the massacre were affixed to the public buildings of the capital, and of various towns in Poland. Defamatory libels of infamous character were circulated. Pictures of the massacre were distributed, representing king Charles and his brother inciting the Parisian populace to slay the unhappy Huguenots. On the margin of these pictures imaginary discourses between the royal brothers were printed. So excited was the public mind at the recital of the horrors of that fatal night, that, it is recorded, the Polish ladies discoursed of it shedding tears of anguish and indignation, and vowing never to accept as their sovereign a prince so barbarous.[1] In the provinces the sensation was not less profound. The Polish Lutherans, or, as they were termed, the Evangelicals or Dissidents, evinced intense abhorrence for Monsieur, and clamoured that the French ambassadors should be dismissed from Poland. Their pulpits resounded with denunciations of the massacre; and with appeals to the faithful of the Polish provinces to aid their afflicted brethren of France. Hideous portraits of the duc d'Anjou were painted and disseminated throughout the country; verses were composed of insulting tenor and appended to these caricatures. The partisans of the archduke were not backward in profiting by this change in public opinion. The palatine of Podolia and the bishop of Cracow Crassinzki, did all in their power to inflame popular resentment, and

[1] De Thou. Choisnin. Cromer: Hist. de Pologne.

challenged the French envoys to disprove a single statement published.

"I thought," says Montluc, in a letter to a friend, "that the cause of Monsieur was shipwrecked, but, nevertheless, I lost not courage." Accordingly, the bishop undertook to write replies in the Latin language to the libels current—a task which he achieved with inimitable skill. An adept in the subtleties of the casuist, Montluc's eloquent defence of his royal master produced a profound effect. He vindicated the duc d'Anjou from aspersions cast upon him; and succeeded in making it appear that, in fact, "the most illustrious duc d'Anjou had neither caused nor exercised influence over the incidents of that lamentable day; and, moreover, that the said duke had never evinced the slightest cruelty of disposition." These letters were also translated into Italian by the indefatigable prelate, and sent, written in both languages, to the diet. Copies were forwarded to the different palatinates, and to the princess Anne in her retreat at Blonie. Montluc, moreover, having two portraits of Monsieur, sent them by trusty messengers for exhibition in some of the principal towns of the realm, "in order to prove that the duc d'Anjou had not ugly and ferocious features, as his enemies represented." The personal gifts with which nature had endowed Henry de Valois warded from him on more than one occasion the retribution which was his just desert.

The senate, meanwhile, assigned to each of the ambassadors of France, Sweden, and Germany a gentleman to act as interpreter, and to show every suitable hospitality and courtesy. So bitter, however, was the feeling against France, that the personage nominated to attend the bishop of Valence refused to perform his functions, and retired to his own house, instead of proceeding to Konin. Every day brought the bishop an

innumerable host of visitors, who, not satisfied with the manifestoes he had published in vindication of the duke, sought a personal interview—some to satisfy their curiosity, others to obtain information from the lips of the ambassador respecting the massacre. Leczinski, palatine of Siradia,[1] paid Montluc a visit, and made minute inquiries relative to the royal family of France. Other magnates sent missions to the bishop by trusty messengers, with whom he was invited to confer.

A few days subsequent to the visit of the palatine of Siradia the treasurer of Poland made a journey to Konin to confer with the bishop of Valence. This interview was deemed one of highest importance by Montluc, as the treasurer, with the palatine of Cracow, was supposed to stand at the head of the Evangelical party of the realm. This nobleman put many searching questions to Montluc concerning the disposition and habits of the duc d'Anjou. The discourse then turned on the massacre of St. Bartholomew's-day; and in reply to the bishop's assurances that Monsieur had no hand in that political proscription, and even refused, when requested, to state his opinion concerning it—"the said prince being of most humane and tolerant disposition"—the treasurer haughtily replied, "Monseigneur, there is no need for you to defend the disposition of monseigneur le duc. If I judge that his highness' election as our king will be profitable to Poland, no apprehension of the cruel disposition of the said prince will prevent my vote. In this kingdom monseigneur le duc would have rather cause to apprehend our enmity and displeasure than for us to tremble before his authority!"[2]

[1] Leczinski was the lineal ancestor of Marie Leczinski, queen of Louis XV.

[2] Mém. de Choisnin, secrétaire de Montluc, évêque de Valence, ambassadeur-extraordinaire en Pologne.

The contest for the crown was now virtually confined between the duc d'Anjou and the archduke Ernest, the pretensions of the Muscovite prince Ivan being withdrawn; and the Swedish ambassador having fallen under the imputation of attempting to carry the election by unfair means through the influence of the princess Anne—who was suspected of favouring the cause of her nephew. A stricter watch, therefore, was maintained round the abode of the princess. A young German was consequently arrested in the town of Blonie, and a letter taken from him ostensibly written by the queen of Sweden to her sister, in which Anne was adjured to aid in the elevation of prince Sigismund to the throne of the Jagellons. The letter was given to the princess in the presence of her ecclesiastical guardians. Her highness forthwith denied its authenticity; alleging that her sister's signature had been forged, inasmuch as it was the custom of queen Katherine to write her name commencing with a K, while the signature in the letter was spelled with a C. The unfortunate German was thereupon seized as a spy, and after a hasty trial condemned to death.[1] The third party in the realm, consisting of those who desired to invest one of their own magnates with sovereign power, was weak, and divided by religious feuds. The Evangelical party refused support to any Polish aspirant for royalty who professed not their own dogmas; and their demeanour became altogether so menacing, that it was apparent to the majority that the royal power must be supported by foreign influence and alliance, to control the factious spirit demonstrated. The circumstance that Charles IX. sought their suffrages for his brother, the heir-presumptive of France, was flattering to the pride of the Polish magnates. The fame of the

[1] Mém. de Choisnin. De Thou. Mezeray. Mathieu. Dupleix.

duc d'Anjou had penetrated even to the secluded provinces of Poland. His repute as a cavalier, valiant in arms, recommended him to the martial nobles; while the wealth and political influence of France seemed to promise stability to the institutions of Poland, and protection against her more potent neighbours. Besides, the *finesse* and discretion of Charles's envoy dissipated every obstacle. Montluc's perseverance and industry seem incredible when taken in detail. There was not a noble in the realm whose ear he did not manage to gain, either by the eloquence of his pen or through the insinuating courtliness of his manner. Not a libel nor a statement adverse to the character of the duc d'Anjou appeared but the ready pen of the prelate refuted the charge; or, if denial were impossible, so enveloped the accusation in the mazes of his eloquence, that it was forgotten in genuine admiration of the writer's skill. In testimony of the surprising efforts made by Montluc to bring his negotiation to a triumphant termination, it is asserted that during his embassy in Poland, which lasted six months, his letters, apologies, manifestoes, and appeals in favour of Monsieur, all written in Latin by the hand of the prelate, covered ten reams of paper. His secretaries Bazin and Choisnin paid frequent visits to the castles of the most potent magnates; for Montluc had the art, by raising political questions, which he pretended could only be expounded by the lips of one of his confidential servants, of appearing to confer a special favour upon these nobles by sending them a secretary to solve the point in debate. In such way the bishop gained to his master's cause the support of the palatines of Siradia, Sandomier, Kalisz, Lublin, and of Plock.

The grand-marshal of the court, Oppalinski, was also won, after a few interviews with the wily diplo-

matist. The Evangelicals of the kingdom, however, held aloof, and refused to be propitiated by Montluc's plausible defence of the duke. Nevertheless, such was the suspicion engendered by the massacre of Paris, that even those who appeared ready to support the election of Monsieur, required guarantees for his future tolerant and equitable rule. They, moreover, demanded that some privileges and ameliorations should be granted to the Huguenots of France. These articles were proposed in the town of Sandomier by the palatines of Cracow and Podolia, the chiefs of the party favourable to the claims of the archduke, and were adopted with acclamation by the diet. The magnitude of these conditions overwhelmed Montluc with amaze and misgiving. Not only did the Polish magnates therein covenant respecting the future government of the realm of Poland; but they had absolutely presumed to dictate articles for the acceptance of the king of France, upon the reception of which the recognition of the duc d'Anjou for their king depended even after the event, which was still doubtful, of his election. The three principal articles related solely to the affairs of France. They stipulated "that the very Christian king, in return for the elevation of his brother to the throne of Poland, should engage to abolish the memory of acts resulting from the late civil wars in France: that his majesty shall grant pardon to those of his subjects content to live peaceably in France, so that they shall not be molested either in their persons or in the exercise of the reformed worship; and that no inquisition shall for the future be made in the houses of those suspected of favouring reform in religion, provided that in all things they live in obedience to the edicts. Moreover, that the said Christian king shall, moved by his clemency and benignity, restore to their honours

and possessions all condemned for the late pretended conspiracy of Paris in the month of August, 1572. In the case of those massacred his majesty shall restore to his royal favour their children and heirs, and annul any edict, ordinance, and judgment to the contrary. That all estates confiscated shall be restored to their owners, or to their heirs; and that no one on any pretext whatever shall be compelled to attend mass or ceremony of the Romish church by force or constraint."[1] These articles were shown to the bishop of Valence, and perused by him; at the same time it was intimated that the duc d'Anjou, in the event of his election, would be required to promise religious toleration within the realm of Poland; and to consent to certain reforms, hereafter to be specified, previous to his proclamation as king. It required all the ingenuity of Montluc to evade this snare. He, however, wisely refused to give any reply or to discuss articles which the failure of his negotiation might altogether supersede: at the same time he wrote urgent letters to Catherine de Medici and the king, stating the sinister impression made by the events of the 24th of August; and entreating their majesties to send the sieur de Lanssac the bearer of letters to the diet containing a positive denial of the most odious portions of the rumours prevalent respecting the massacre. He, moreover, sent to the duc d'Anjou copies of all the manifestoes he had published in his defence or to promote his election; a minute concerning the proceedings of the imperial ambassadors; and a map of Poland. By the first day of March, 1573, Lanssac arrived, bringing "a very complete refutation of the calumnies uttered against M. d'Anjou," and a recital of the massacres, their origin and extent,

[1] La Popelinière: Hist. de France, tome ii. liv. 35, fol. 176. Choisnin. De Thou.

from the pen of M. de Pibrac,[1] a gentleman in the household of Monsieur.

The diet meanwhile, before which the ambassadors were to make their orations, had been convened to meet at Warsaw on the fifth day of April, 1573. It was to consist of all the nobles and chief gentlemen of the kingdom; and before this august assembly the ambassadors of each candidate for royalty were to plead. Amongst the partisans of the French was one Solikoski, an advocate of distinction, who had been private secretary to the deceased king Sigismund II. Through M. Solikoski Montluc ascertained that the imperial ambassador von Rosenburg intended to address the assembly in the Bohemian tongue, which, from its resemblance to the Polish, could be understood by all. Montluc had prepared his oration in Latin; but the advantage which his rival might gain by addressing the multitude in a dialect universally understood, caused him the most serious solicitude. Each of the ambassadors was to deliver thirty-two manuscript copies of his oration before leaving the diet. One of these copies was to be given to each palatine, that he might again read the address to the nobles and gentlemen of his palatinate before proceeding to the election. This arrangement sufficed for the zealous Montluc, and afforded him opportunity to achieve another diplomatic triumph over his adversaries. The bishop had already received assistance from Solikoski in rendering many of his addresses into the Polish tongue; and in this emergency Montluc again applied to the ex-secretary, and requested him to translate his oration into the vernacular. This task Solikoski readily undertook. Montluc then determined, though at some risk, to print his Latin oration, with its translation. The greatest caution and secrecy were

[1] Guy du Faur seigneur de Pibrac, one of the most eloquent orators of the age; renowned also for his wit and gallant deportment.

preserved, and ten days before the assembling of the diet, Choisnin repaired to Cracow, where by mingled bribery and address he caused fifteen hundred copies of the oration to be printed; the secretary himself superintending the press, and concealing with the utmost care the important documents as they were issued.[1]

On the third day of April the bishop of Valence arrived in Warsaw. The greatest ceremony was observed towards each ambassador, who was received and escorted to the lodging prepared for him by a deputation appointed by the senate. The palatines and prelates of the realm had lodgings assigned to them in Warsaw. The castellans and gentlemen of each palatinate, by command of the diet, encamped about six miles from the capital—each palatinate forming a separate quarter, distinguished by the banners and colours of its chieftain. When this mighty assemblage had congregated, it consisted of more than forty thousand persons. On a vast plain lying to the north of the city a gigantic pavilion had been erected, capable of holding six thousand persons. Within this pavilion seats were raised for the accommodation of the senate: the prelates had the precedence; next were places reserved for the palatines, castellans, captains of provinces, and for any foreign ambassadors not concerned in the election who might be present. Around this pavilion were twelve smaller ones for the reception of the gentlemen not members of the Polish senate, who had journeyed from the provinces to record their votes. The ceremonial was ordered thus. On the appointed day the papal legate was to open the conference; the ambassador of the emperor being next to harangue the assemblage; then the bishop of Valence; afterwards the envoy of Sweden was to be heard. An interval of some days

[1] Mém. de Jean de Choisnin, secrétaire de Montluc évêque de Valence.

had then to elapse: each palatine was afterwards to assemble the nobles and gentlemen of his province at their quarters, and after reading the addresses of the ambassadors, proceed to collect the suffrages, which he was forthwith to present to the senate, the whole recorded in a book sealed with the seal of the palatinate.

On the eighth day of April the conferences commenced. The senate assembled betimes in the pavilion, while the vast plain was covered with spectators. The pageant was of the most imposing description. The men of each palatinate, armed and equipped, rode to the place of conference headed by their palatine, castellans, and captains, and preceded by drums, trumpets, and banners. After defiling across the plain, they accompanied their chieftains and deputies to the portal of the great tent, and fell back in the line appointed. The greatest order and decorum were maintained. The papal legate, the cardinal Commendon, first addressed the august assembly. The cardinal spoke long and eloquently, he lauded the pious zeal displayed by the house of Valois; and proceeded to make some comment on the recent occurrences in Paris, which so displeased the nobles of the Evangelical party, that his Eminence was interrupted by shouts of disapprobation. The following day the ambassador of the emperor was heard. Von Rosenburg's address was listened to with attention; but, as his voice was feeble, and his manner tame, his oration produced little effect. The imperial ambassador drew a parallel, contrasting the relative advantages which Poland would enjoy under German or Gallic rule. He stated that there were four insuperable objections to the election of the duc d'Anjou: the first was that the said duke did not understand the language of the Poles; the second, that, in case of need, Poland could obtain no assistance from France, on account of the distance between the coun-

tries; thirdly, that Monsieur, if elected, would never be permitted by the German princes and the king of Denmark to take possession of Poland, inasmuch as they intended to deny him passage through their dominions; fourthly, that the emperor and his son were humane and conscientious princes, who hated effusion of blood, and knew how to govern their subjects with paternal rule, however much they might differ in religion —an assertion which insinuated that the cruel zeal lately displayed by the duc d'Anjou ought to disqualify him for the throne.[1] As soon as the imperial ambassador concluded his harangue, the palatines of Lublin and Pomerania, and the comte de Tenchin, hereditary high chamberlain, were despatched to summon the French ambassador to plead his master's cause before the assembly. But the subtle prelate had resolved, before pronouncing his own discourse, to learn the substance of the oration delivered by the imperial ambassador, that he might refute assertions injurious to the cause of the duke.

Accordingly, when the deputies arrived at Montluc's abode, they found the prelate in bed, apparently suffering from a severe attack of illness. As it was deemed impossible to carry a sick man from his bed to harangue before the representatives of a nation, the deputies were unwillingly compelled to retire. Their departure was no sooner reported to Montluc, than he rose from his bed and set about ascertaining the important points requisite for the morrow. Towards nightfall an emissary brought the ambassador one of the copies of the oration deposited by von Rosenburg with the president of the council for distribution. Montluc immediately commenced to write a reply to the four points objected against the duke by his adversary. To accomplish this

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvi. Mém. de l'Etat de France sous Charles IX. La Popelinière: Hist. de France. Mém. de Choisnin.

it was necessary to reject five pages of the oration which Montluc had already composed, printed, and learned by heart. The bishop's zeal and ability were equal to his emergency; and after the labour of a night Montluc had completed the necessary addition to his Latin oration. He then summoned Solikoski, and conjured him to translate what he had composed into Polish; afterwards, by the bishop's directions, twenty scribes were set to work to copy the additions, which were cleverly inserted in the printed copies. By this means, at the end of three days, the ambassador beheld one thousand copies of the amended harangue ready for distribution.[1]

The following morning, April 10th, the deputies from the senate again appeared to conduct the bishop of Valence into the presence of the general assembly of magnates of the realm. Once standing on the tribune face to face with the august assemblage, Montluc felt his triumph secure. Excited by the magnitude of the prize for which he contended, the fervour of that unrivalled eloquence which had elicited thunders of applause from the Venetian senate and in the hall of the Roman Consistory, shook the assemblage of Polish magnates. During the space of three hours the orator spoke, his words rivetting the attention of the vast concourse. 'Sometimes vehement cheers interrupted his harangue; while the enchantment of the prelate's majestic language effaced all remembrance of the accusations preferred against the prince whose cause was defended by an advocate so able. "The bishop having concluded his harangue, there rose round about the tent a shout of applause, wild and vehement as if the election had already been proclaimed; and such was the effect of the ambassador's eloquence, that had the suffrages been immediately taken, not one dissentient

[1] Choisnin, liv. ii.

voice would have been raised," relates an eye-witness of the scene.[1]

Montluc in his discourse alluded to the massacre of Paris. He utterly denied the duke's complicity in the proscription, as he had not scrupled to do during the entire negotiation. The bishop's statement was to the effect "that all which had happened at Paris was by accident, not by design. That the king had taken every possible precaution to hinder the same excesses from being perpetrated in the provinces, his majesty having despatched an edict decreeing severe penalties to all disturbers of public tranquillity. All the towns of the realm had thereupon rendered obedience to his majesty's edict, excepting six, where it had been found impossible to restrain the fury of the populace, animated by the memory of former injuries received from the Protestants. As for M. d'Anjou, when his advice had been asked, he absolutely refused to speak, deeming it shameful to assassinate so many persons in cold blood, whose chieftains he had so often gloriously vanquished in the battle-field." Montluc further stated that no one had ever seen Monsieur disturbed in temper. He stated that the revenue of his French appanages amounted to the sum of 450,000 gold crowns; and that this wealth, if possessed by their future king, would enable him to build a fleet and to restore the university of Cracow to its ancient prosperity.[2]

The Swedish ambassador next addressed the diet. His speech was short and to the purpose; but it pro-

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps. Mathieu: Vie de Charles IX. Commentaires de messire Blaise de Montluc, maréchal de France. Election de Henri III. Roy de Pologne, par Jean de Montluc, Evêque de Valence—Paris, 1574.

[2] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvi. Choisnin. Cromer: Hist. de Pologne. La Popelinière. Harangues de l'Evêque de Valence et autres à la Diète de Varsovie—Imprimées à Paris par Richer, 1573, in 8vo. The income of the duc d'Anjou was 135,000*l.* sterling.

duced no effect. Montluc, meantime, retired to his abode, escorted in triumph by a retinue of nobles; for his rare gift of rhetoric had previously been unknown. In a few hours a formal demand was preferred by the senate for copies of the harangue for distribution: but upon various pretexts the bishop delayed its issue until all the orations had been spoken. Printed copies were then bountifully given to all who demanded them, "so that where one copy of the harangue of the imperial ambassador was found there were twenty of our oration, though it did not contain one-half of what our ambassador had spoken."

The imperial ambassadors, meanwhile, sensible of the advance made by their opponents, sought to regain popularity by giving a series of magnificent banquets. "But by this means," says Choisnin, "they alienated more persons than they won to their cause; for those who were excluded, believing that the imperialists designed to carry the election by the magnates of the land, came over to our party." Montluc, on the other hand, gave no entertainments, but courteously received persons of every rank who paid him visits: "nevertheless, the said reverend lord nearly sacrificed his life by this courtesy; for such was the multitude of our visitors that at night he was utterly exhausted with anxiety, talking, and fatigue."

The money and banquetings of the imperial ambassador and the insinuating diplomacy of the bishop of Valence began to cause serious disquietude to the council of state, lest the purity and independence of the election might be impaired. It was therefore proposed that the ambassadors of all the candidates should now be desired to quit the realm; a measure which was carried by a majority of voices in the diet. This decision caused the greatest dissatisfaction; the ambassadors protested against its injustice and the cost

which it would entail on their respective sovereigns. The bishop of Valence boldly declared that, if he departed from the realm, he should not return. The adherents of the French, meantime, agitated so successfully amongst the electors of the palatinates, that the latter assembled in powerful bands, and marching to the senate, declared that they disavowed the vote of their deputies, and desired that the ambassadors should not be exiled. The men of the province of Masovia, moreover, undertook to entertain the envoys, in case their absence from Warsaw during the election was deemed indispensable. After much riot and debate it was resolved to send a mandate commanding the ambassadors to retire to a specified town; a promise being exacted from each that he would refrain from influencing the forthcoming votes by money or intrigue. The town of Plock on the Vistula, fifteen leagues from Warsaw, was assigned to the bishop of Valence; and that of Lowicz to the imperialists.[1] The notification was made to the ambassadors by a herald in the name of the palatine of Cracow, grand-marshal of the realm. Von Rosenburg thereupon protested that nothing should induce him to quit Warsaw; and acting upon this determination, a most unseemly contest ensued between himself and the grand-marshal deputed to carry into effect the decree of the diet. As the bishop of Valence also showed some disinclination to depart, the palatine sent a second and more urgent message. Montluc, therefore, with his wonted tact, summoned his staff, and forthwith set out for Plock, leaving a courteous message for the palatine, which was repeated in the diet, and gained much applause, at the same time that the discourteous refusal of Von Rosenburg was reported.

No sooner, however, were the fears of the senators

[1] Mém de Choisnin. Discours sur l'Histoire des Polonois en l'Election du duc d'Anjou—Nicholas Pavillon. Lyons, 1574.

relieved by the departure of the ambassadors, than it was proposed in the diet to proceed to a revision of the laws and constitution of the realm before electing the king. This design caused renewed clamour and discontent. The electors from the provinces encamped on the plains of Warsaw began to grow weary of their tents; the weather, which had been rigorous, still remained cold. Moreover, apprehensions existed that the plague, which still raged in parts of the kingdom, might break forth amid that vast concourse. Intimation was forthwith made that, unless the election was proceeded with, the majority of the electors intended to depart for their homes, as their lands had to be cropped and their domestic affairs administered. The malcontents were joined by the archbishop-primate Uchanzhi, and by the bishops of Cracow and Wladislaw. The secession of the primate and the tumult and turbulence without at length compelled the diet to acquiesce in the demands of the majority. With extraordinary speed, therefore, the preliminary arrangements were made, and the day of election fixed by proclamation for Monday, May 3rd, 1573: the diet being, moreover, moved by a reported league amongst the Evangelical party, headed by the palatine of Cracow, to elect one of its own partisans.[1]

The eventful morning of the third of May was ushered in by extraordinary solemnities. The senate, consisting of the nobles and prelates, met beneath the spacious pavilion, and waited the event in silence. The chieftain of each palatinate, meanwhile, repaired to his quarter, and assembled the electors of the province. The men of each district, headed by their palatine, first knelt and supplicated for Divine enlightenment. They then sang the hymn 'Veni Creator.' The assemblage then

[1] Cromer: Hist. de Pologne. Mém. de l'Etat de France, année 1573.

proceeded to the election. During that first day thirteen of the palatinates returned a majority of suffrages for the duc d'Anjou—a result which was proclaimed with triumph. The following day the remaining palatinates, excepting the duchy of Lithuania, returned the name of Henry de Valois by immense majorities. On Wednesday the men of the duchy of Lithuania went over to the French side. The votes of the palatines, nobles, prelates, and members of the diet were taken on the succeeding day. This was the most important ordeal of the election. The prelates and nobles inimical to France leagued together in hostile array; and so threatening was the language used, that at one time the opposing factions seemed inclined to appeal to arms. When the registers containing the votes of the electors were presented to the assembly, and the majority of suffrages declared to be for the duc d'Anjou, the palatine of Podolia, who, in default of a Polish candidate, supported the pretensions of the archduke, rose and quitted the assembly, followed by many of his adherents. Affairs began to assume a most menacing aspect, and the confusion became so great that distinction of party was lost amidst the general excitement. Count Taboriscki, however, ascended the dais upon which the archbishop-president sat enthroned, and called to the partisans of the duc d'Anjou to render themselves conspicuous by tying white handkerchiefs round their arms, or to display a white cockade, so that their numbers might be evidenced. When this was done, the majority of the duke's adherents was so conspicuous, that the dissentients, after a noisy protest, acquiesced in the election. These proceedings terminated on the ninth day of May, at seven in the evening. The archbishop of Gnesen advanced into the midst of the assembly and made solemn proclamation of the

duc d'Anjou as king of Poland—an illegal proceeding which gave cause for further controversy.[1]

The number of votes recorded for the archduke Ernest was five hundred only; and of these his supporters, all eventually embraced the party of the duc d'Anjou excepting the bishop of Plock, who continued steadfast to the imperial cause. Meanwhile the palatine of Sandomeir despatched an express to the bishop of Valence apprizing him of the triumphant election of the duc d'Anjou. The bishop hastened back to Warsaw, and arrived in time to oppose his dexterous diplomacy to the designs of the hostile party. The palatines of Cracow, Wladislaw, and Ravitz, repenting of their concessions in the senate, and in league with Von Rosenburg, asserted that the proclamation of the king by the archbishop of Gnesen was irregular; and demanded that it should be cancelled and the proclamation made by the marshal of the realm, palatine of Cracow. Next, they testified that they had assented to the election of the duc d'Anjou on the understanding only that the ambassador signed the articles drawn at Sandomeir, and previously presented to him by the palatine of Cracow and the other chieftains of the Evangelical party. Montluc sent to remonstrate with the malcontents: he proposed that the archbishop's proclamation should be regarded as non-official; and as for the articles, the duc d'Anjou, he said, would render justice to every man on his arrival. The palatine of Cracow and his colleagues expressed themselves satisfied with the bishop's proposal respecting the proclamation of the king; but demanded that the senate should assemble again in the great pavilion, and all things proceed as if no such formality had been observed. It required all Montluc's address to vanquish the opposition of his own party, which refused this concession, and held that the

[1] Choisnin, liv. ii. Mathieu.

primate's proclamation of the king was valid. He knew, however, that the continued hostility of the potent chiefs of Cracow and Podolia would virtually annul the election of the duke. The ambassador, therefore, appealed to the patriotism of the archbishop-primate, and with such success, that on Thursday, May 14th, the great plain of Warsaw again swarmed with multitudes. Before the senate quitted the capital a deputation of the most illustrious of its Evangelical members waited upon the bishop of Valence to exact his signature to the articles of Sandomeir as the representative of Monsieur. The palatines of Cracow and Podolia distinctly stated, on behalf of the deputies, that they considered the duke's elevation to the throne of Poland as conditional on his after ratification of the document; otherwise they refused their assent to the election. In vain the bishop tried to evade the demand by every argument suggested by the most subtle address; the envoys were resolute; and as there was no alternative but to sign the articles or to hazard the election, Montluc complied. When the bishop wrote to Charles IX. to excuse himself for accepting articles so derogatory to the dignity of the crown of France, he suggested, "that the Poles could not expect that his majesty should govern the realm of France according to their dictation, so that, in reality, the articles might remain a dead letter; and as for M. d'Anjou, when he took possession of his crown, he, with the aid of the senate, and despite the dissidents, would legislate according to his good pleasure."[1] He also drew the king's attention to the obvious fact that the articles were not yet authenticated by his own royal signature, nor even by that of Monsieur.

As the Polish magnates were far from suspecting these mental reservations on the part of the astute prelate, Henry duc d'Anjou was proclaimed king of

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii.

Poland—first, by the palatine of Cracow Dambrowicz; secondly, by the grand-marshal of the court Oppalinski; the third recognition of the royal titles being made for the duchy of Lithuania by the Starost of Samogitia.[1] A *Te Deum* was then sung in the church at Warsaw; and, at the earnest request of the bishop of Valence, the chiefs of the Evangelical party consented to be present at the ceremony.[2] This concession was not the most insignificant of Montluc's triumphs. By his dexterous diplomacy he had procured the elevation of Monsieur in preference to formidable opponents, supported, the one by the influence of close kindred with the royal race of Jagellon; and the other by the power and *prestige* of the empire. He had reconciled divisions, prevailed over antipathies, and by the force of his eloquence had amalgamated the most discordant prejudices, until by acclamation the nation hailed Monsieur as king.

On leaving the cathedral the first care of the bishop of Valence was to address a letter to the prince whom his abilities had so ably served. "Sire," wrote the bishop, "I address you thus, because you have been proclaimed king of Poland, if you deign to accept that dignity. Your elevation, sire, is not the work of my hand, as you were pleased to say in your recent letter; it is God who has raised you to a throne through an unheard-of miracle. God has, moreover, endowed you with gifts rare and precious. He has given you the victory in two memorable battles; while by your graces of mind and person you have been able to gain the love and respect of an infinity of worthy personages. In short, sire, He has rendered you amiable to the many, and formidable to your enemies alone."—"Madame,"

[1] Ivan Chodkiewicz.

[2] La fausta et felice Elettione in Ré di Polonia di Henrico de Valois, da Emilio Maria Monotesso—Venetia 1573.

wrote the bishop to Catherine de Medici, "I have kept the promise which I made to your majesty. Monseigneur is king of Poland! When I consider and contemplate the hindrances which I have encountered, and the number of enemies whom I have had to vanquish; also, the intrigues, leagues, partialities, and the august rank of the other competitors, I humbly acknowledge that God Almighty has wrought a miracle, of which, madame, I have been the humble instrument."[1]

The king of Poland was besieging the town of La Rochelle when the news of his election reached him. The intelligence was received by Henry without pleasure or exultation. The sceptre of distant Poland, in Henry's estimation, was a mediocre substitute for the allurements of Paris and the court. Yet Henry's position in France daily became more precarious: the suspicions of the king had augmented since the massacre of Paris; and the ancient jealousy of his brother's military repute again revived in the breast of Charles IX. The proscription of the Protestants had been followed by a general rising. The brave Rochellois flew to arms to avenge their slaughtered chieftains; fresh leagues were negotiated between the queen of England and the German princes; and a fourth civil contest seemed inevitable. Charles, now believing himself to be invincible, commanded the levy of three large armies—one of which was sent to besiege the Huguenot town of Sancerre; a second, under the maréchal Damville, marched into Languedoc, a province the stronghold of Calvinism; the third army, under the maréchals Strozzi and de Biron, invested La Rochelle. No signal successes, however, attended the royal arms. Sancerre repulsed the assaults of the besiegers; the campaign of Damville in Languedoc proved a failure; while with irresistible bravery the Rochellois

[1] Mém. de l'Etat de France sous Charles IX.

defended their town against the royal army. The siege had lasted many months, when a final effort was made for the capture of the rebel city. Monsieur, accompanied by the chivalry of the court, departed to take the command. The duke displayed, during his brief campaign, military talents of the highest order. His bravery in leading the assaults was an example which never failed his soldiers. Away from the temptations of the court, the duc d'Anjou appeared intent on rendering himself worthy of the encomiums lavished upon him by the most enthusiastic of his admirers. His munificence won him popularity with the soldiery. The tact and condescension manifested by Monsieur in his intercourse with his officers conciliated faction; while his judicious recognition of the claims of each man under his command rendered all zealous to serve the royal cause. The character of the duke ever thus presents a singular medley of ability and inertness. When roused from the numbing effects of luxury and dissipation, Henry on this and on other occasions displayed manly qualities; his bravery during his early youth was unquestioned; while on many matters his judgment seems to have been just. As a master he was considerate and indulgent. His ambition to become popular fostered the natural insincerity of his character. Nevertheless, the jealousy shown by the king at his brother's military reputation, and at the affection borne him by the queen-mother, almost compelled Monsieur to dissimulate. A prince of rigid virtue and heroic mind would otherwise, it is true, have combated the disadvantages of his position; but the spirit of stealthy perfidy so early infused into Henry's mind by Catherine had taught him that every resource was legitimate to vanquish opposition which defied the blandishment of royal smiles or the threats of judicial awards. In the case of his sister

the queen of Navarre, and in the still more recent instance of the death of Coligny, Henry demonstrated how unscrupulous was his character when roused in self-defence. As long as blandishments, distinctions, and pecuniary bribes could win enemies or assuage faction, the duc d'Anjou was content, nay, even rejoiced, to adopt such reprisals. These, however, failing, the knife of the assassin, the tongue of the slanderer, or the oblivion of the dungeon were remorselessly used by the duke to annihilate his adversary; to allay his fears of personal violence; and to dissipate the disquietudes which mingled with the feverish delusions of dissipation. The terrible example of the mode in which the queen and her son rid themselves of obstinate opponents had not been lost on the duc de Guise. Marguerite de Valois, even, had been taught by it to form a sounder estimate of the cost of Monsieur's enmity. After the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, the position of the princes of Lorraine became beyond measure critical. Huguenot and Roman Catholic had at first united in ascribing to their bigotry and revenge the catastrophe deplored throughout France by all patriotic citizens. A word from the sovereign or his brother confirmatory of the popular belief would have gone far to destroy the *prestige* of the princes of Guise in the provinces of the realm. It was true that the king had accepted the responsibility of the massacre, and had caused his royal proclamation sanctioning the "justice done on the rebels of Paris" to be registered by his parliament as perpetrated by his express command; yet the princes of Lorraine had good cause to apprehend that in the urgent necessity which existed for the reconciliation of Charles IX. with his Huguenot subjects, the odium of the bloody proscription would still be cast on them. The duc de Guise, therefore, warily made overtures towards a better understanding with

Monsieur, and consequently with queen Catherine. Henry received the duke's *empressement* with some misgivings; but as he never unmasked an enemy or willingly provoked hostilities, the former had reason to be satisfied with his reception. Among the intimates of Monsieur, the duc de Guise towered a giant in intellect and manly prowess. Henry, however, yielded nothing to the duke in bravery or in the advantages of majestic presence. A faithful adherent of the Romish church, Guise gloried in affording consistent support to his faith. He deemed the dogmas of Luther and Calvin to be revolutionary and accursed; and consequently the death of the leaders of the sectaries—men who had presumed to raise the banner of revolt against the sovereign—he held to have been just and lawful. The duc d'Anjou during the ascendancy of Coligny professed the same sentiments, and acted on the convictions thereby inspired. Three months after the massacre, however, Monsieur's abhorrence of "*les vaincus de Jarnac et de Moncontour*" appeared wonderfully diminished. He it was now who in concert with the queen-mother affected to deprecate the wrath of the king against the remnant of the Protestant league; while he even showed himself tolerant of Huguenot worship. A friendship which Henry suddenly contracted with the maréchal de Montmorency and his brothers, whom before he had affected to hold in suspicion, was denounced by the king with mingled rage and irony. The duc d'Anjou, however, was playing a subtle game. The great chieftains of the Huguenot faction had all been cut off by the massacre: disorganized, and hunted by the royal lieutenants from province to province, the Calvinists of France looked for protection to the chiefs of the league formed under the duc d'Alençon, and termed Les Politiques. The princes, members of this league, upheld toleration and religious freedom, though without avowing themselves

converts to the reformed tenets. The secret aim of the duc d'Anjou, after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, was to procure his own recognition eventually as the head of this party—one powerful, nominally orthodox, but by its *liaison* with the Calvinists strengthened by foreign sympathies and support—and eminently calculated to aid him in his ever-recurring contests with the royal authority. Thus Henry, by the help of that party whose purely Protestant organization he had combined to destroy, desired to league himself against the crown and its natural supporters—the orthodox of the realm, whom he had helped to make strong—in order to maintain pre-eminence by the opposition of factions. The elevation of the duke to the crown of Poland arrested the intrigue before it became mature. The design, however, remained the dominant political idea of Henry's mind; and it will be seen how, when the coveted sceptre of France became his own, Henry III. from the throne attempted to work out his theory, and to rule with absolute sway, by an ignoble competition with Henri de Guise, then in league with the ultra-orthodox of the realm.

The news of Henry's election to the crown of Poland, meanwhile, brought the siege of La Rochelle to a termination, by the offer, on the part of king Charles, of terms of accommodation to the besieged. The return of the bishop of Valence was expected, accompanied by ambassadors from the diet to announce his election to Henry, and to witness his acceptance of the sovereign dignity. The assurances of Montluc before the diet, as to the alleged favour with which king Charles viewed his subjects of the reformed faith; and the bishop's explanations relative to the massacre of Paris, it was felt, would be little confirmed by actual evidence, if, on the arrival of the ambassadors, their newly-elected king was found investing the refuge of the most illustrious of the

survivors; while Sancerre and other towns of the realm endured the combined horrors of famine and siege. The bishop, moreover, had forwarded to their majesties a copy of the articles upon the ratification of which the powerful Lutheran party in Poland alone consented to recognise the royal title of Monsieur. An edict of pacification, therefore, was granted by the king during the last days of June, 1573. The Rochellois kept their town; the only mark of submission exacted being that the chief magistrates should in a body pray the king of Poland—as Henry was now everywhere termed—to enter the town; a prayer which it was stipulated his said majesty was to decline.

Public exercise of the reformed ritual was prohibited by the edict, excepting within the towns of La Rochelle, Nîmes, and Montauban.[1] The siege of Sancerre was also raised, but the inhabitants obtained neither pardon for their resistance, nor permission to worship even privately in conformity with the reformed doctrines, until after the arrival of the Polish ambassadors, who interceded in their behalf. The king lost 12,000 men before La Rochelle. Many noble personages likewise fell, including the duc d'Aumale, uncle of the duc de Guise.[2]

Monsieur then visited Nantes. While in this ancient city, which gave him most loyal reception, the duc d'Anjou received a missive from his royal mother. Catherine wrote to advertise Henry what it would be politic for him to say to king Charles on his arrival in the capital; and she tells the duke the advice which she should desire him to offer on his departure for Poland—a right that, as lieutenant-general of the realm, clearly appertained, she said, to his office. The queen excelled in this mode of prompting; she often had had recourse

[1] Mezeray: Grande Histoire. Vie de Charles IX.—Brantôme.
[2] Le Siége de Sancerre: Archives Curieuses, tome viii.

to it in her letters to her deceased daughter Elizabeth queen of Spain, dictating the precise language to be used in order to win the ear of Philip II. The burden of her majesty's counsel to her beloved son is, "humbly to thank your brother for the honour he has conferred upon you in making you a king." She next directs Henry to "tender some wholesome counsel respecting the enrolment, pay, and privileges of the *gendarmerie;* to exhort the king to maintain the peace; and to command, as a means, that each bishop be dismissed from court to his diocese, as such a step will content and pacify the really good and conscientious, especially as respects those prelates who know how to preach; as for the incapable, they will still serve to control by their presence many factious spirits." The queen concludes a long letter of seven pages, by expressing her gladness at the prospect of so soon clasping her heroic son in her arms.[1]

The eagerness displayed by the newly-elected king to rejoin the court, however, arose from his passionate desire to behold again the princesse de Condé. The beauty of Marie de Clèves had made the most profound impression on the mind of Monsieur.[2] Her winning manners and numerous accomplishments charmed his fastidious taste. Unhappily for the peace of the princess, Henry was permitted access to her presence whenever he chose to seek it. The severe and reserved character of Condé terrified the princess; his reproaches

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy Portef, 331-2-3. Lettre de Catherine de Medici à Henri III. son fils, lors Roy de Pologne, 1573. Ined.

[2] The poet Passaret, in a collection of poems entitled, 'Le Tombeau de Fleurice par Miré,' celebrates the beauty of Marie de Clèves in a long elegy. Amongst other charms he says that:—

> La femme de Tithon l'honora de ses doigts:
> Junon de son marcher, les Muses de leurs voix;
> Elle eut l'esprit savant de Minerve la sage,
> Des Graces les attraits, le port, et le corsage.

for her encouragement of the advances of the duc d'Anjou further alienated the royal pair. Marie temporarily resided with her sister madame de Nevers, who threw few obstacles in the way of the frequent visits of Monsieur to the hôtel de Nevers—indeed it would seem that the duchess condescended to become the *confidente* of Henry's passion. At this period all Marie's relatives feared to thwart the duke; and not one of them possessed the courage and honour to rescue the princess from the peril which menaced her. The duc de Guise had powerful reasons for seeking to propitiate Monsieur: besides, Henry had confided to the duke his intention of espousing Marie after the dissolution of her marriage with Condé; a project which Henry said was to be immediately achieved by the influence of France at the papal court. The attraction of Marie's society brought the duke once more into intimate intercourse with his sister the queen of Navarre; and through the influence of the princess a temporary reconciliation ensued. Daily the duc d'Anjou appeared more enamoured of the beautiful wife of Condé; while he loathed the very mention of his Polish crown which was to separate him from her society. Marie herself seems to have yielded to the fascinations of Monsieur,[1] and to have accepted his professions. There is little doubt that the attachment of Henry de Valois to the princess of Condé was the most sincere and lasting passion of his life; though, unfortunately, he became aware of it when, like so many other aspirations of his life, its indulgence was legally unattainable.

[1] The poet Desportes gives us a description of the personal graces of the duc d'Anjou at this period. He says:—

> Il eut la taille belle, et le visage beau;
> Son teint était de lys, et de roses pourprètes
> Et ses yeux rigoureux dardoient milles sagettes,
> On le prend pour l'Amour!

For a short interval the princess reigned supreme over the revels of the court. The duke wore her portrait suspended from his neck; and the courtiers began to bow before a star whose political lustre promised to be so brilliant. The prince de Condé, seriously alarmed at the constancy of Henry's attachment, dreaded lest his beautiful wife should be torn from him—whose conversion was believed to be insincere—by a papal decree. An appeal to the king partly relieved his anxiety, as his majesty promptly declared that "he would not suffer the severance of the marriage-tie between Condé and his wife, to please the caprice of Monsieur." Though the princess of Condé was guilty of great indiscretion in her intercourse with Henry, unable to resist the flattery of so accomplished a prince, we have no evidence to justify the assertion that she was guilty of any actual violation of her marriage vows. A few months subsequently, and of her own freewill, the princess rejoined her husband after his flight from Paris, at St. Jean d'Angely; where, surrounded by his Huguenot friends in a town in revolt against the royal authority, Marie's abode would not have proved of the most inviting description had she given the prince real and legitimate ground for jealousy. Moreover, had the princess of Condé so far forgotten the dignity of her birth, it seems improbable that Henry on his accession to the throne of France should have declared his resolve to espouse her; and have directed his ministers to take the necessary measures for procuring the dissolution of her marriage with Condé.

The duke, after his return from La Rochelle, absorbed by his passion for the princesse de Condé, totally neglected mademoiselle de Châteauneuf,[1] and showed no desire to resume his ancient *liaison*. Renée de

[1] Renée de Châteauneuf was the daughter of Jean de Rieux and of Béatrix de Jonchères, dame de Perrière. She was born in 1550.

Châteauneuf, vehement and impulsive, was not inclined submissively to submit to the slights of Monsieur, the more especially now that he wore a crown. She therefore angrily reproached the duke for his abandonment of her for the wife of Condé, a princess of the blood, who, she tauntingly told Henry, would slight his love; or that his attachment, if reciprocated, would prove the perdition of the beautiful Marie. Henry could not behold unmoved the tears shed by Renée, as she passionately bewailed his departure, and her own desolate condition. The duke thereupon uttered many encouraging words, it is recorded; the most comforting to the ear of Renée de Rieux being probably his promise to negotiate her marriage with some wealthy lord of the court before his journey to Poland. He, moreover, undertook to recommend her special protection to the queen his mother. The duke meanwhile, without loss of time, began to investigate the manner in which he could best redeem his matrimonial promise to mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, whose birth was illustrious, and her fame stainless in all except the notorious fact of her *liaison* with himself. Accordingly he selected Antoine Duprat, seigneur de Nantouillet, grandson of the famous cardinal Duprat, minister of Francis I., as the recipient of the hand of the fair Renée. Duprat was a wealthy bachelor, whose magnificent hôtel on the quai des Augustins faced the Louvre, the river flowing between. The duke caused the marriage to be proposed to M. de Nantouillet by queen Catherine, who engaged to give mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, on her marriage, a post of distinction at court. Nantouillet, however, bluntly declined the proposed alliance, adding, "that he was not the man to barter his honour to shield the vices of another, whatever might be the advantages promised." The queen repeated Nantouillet's words to her son, who in his

turn communicated them to the king, adding many expressions of indignation at the baron's insolent rejoinder.

The king therefore, who also bore Nantouillet a grudge relative to some financial transactions which had passed between them, concerted with his brother a scheme to avenge themselves on the baron. During the following night, the king, his brother, the king of Navarre, and the grand-prior of France entered the hôtel of Nantouillet closely masked, and after roughly rousing its master, demanded a collation. This was willingly offered to such illustrious guests by the sieur de Nantouillet; but the repast over, the most outrageous scene of violence ensued. The royal party commenced by overturning the table, and breaking the furniture of the apartments. They next appropriated the splendid silver vessels on the tables. They broke open the coffers of Nantouillet and seized the money and jewels they found; and finally the royal burglars pursued their terrified host to his own chamber, whither he had taken refuge. There, after heaping upon him most opprobrious epithets, they tore his bed, destroyed the tapestry and mirrors in the apartment, and concluded this royal frolic by rifling other drawers and coffers containing valuables of great price. The king and his brother then quitted the hôtel, well content with the retribution they had exacted.[1]

Nantouillet's domestics, however, ignorant of the rank of the parties who had invaded their master's house, spread the intelligence of this nocturnal visitation over Paris. The following day the provost of Paris visited Nantouillet, while the first president of the parliament of Paris proceeded to the palace to make a formal complaint to his majesty of so great an

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps. Etoile: Journal de Henri III. Mém. pour l'Histoire de France.

outrage, which he said had scandalized every one, and was supposed to have been committed by some of the riotous young courtiers in the household of the king of Poland. As for M. de Nantouillet himself, he declared to the provost that he left the affair in the hands of the king; and declined, although greatly pressed, to reveal the names of any concerned in the disreputable frolic. The president, however, hinted to the king that public rumour ascribed participation in the outrage to his majesty. Charles replied, that he had no share in it. "Well, sire, have I your majesty's commands to institute a searching investigation concerning the authors of the outrage?"—"No, no!" abruptly responded the king; "give yourself, M. le président, no further trouble in the matter. Tell M. de Nantouillet from me, that his adversaries will be too strong for him, should he seek redress from the laws." M. de Nantouillet, therefore, consoled himself for his losses, and wisely made no further appeals for justice against his three royal pillagers; though for many weeks subsequent to the adventure the jeers of the courtiers assailed him whenever he presented himself at the Louvre. The sack of his house, as may be imagined, did not render Nantouillet more propitious or sensible to the charms of mademoiselle de Châteauneuf; and when the alliance was again proposed to him, he had the resolution to return a negative so decisive that the project was abandoned.[1]

Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, however, reserved for herself the privilege of peculiar revenge. One day the beautiful virago, while riding on horseback with some of her companions, perceived Nantouillet, who was leisurely walking along the quai de l'Ecole. The sight

[1] Nantouillet, who was one of the hostages delivered to queen Elizabeth for the ratification of the treaty of Catenu-Cambresis, espoused subsequently Anne de Barbançon, daughter of the sieur de Cany.

of the man who had scorned her alliance so greatly inflamed her ire, that she spurred her horse and deliberately rode over him. Nantouillet was seriously injured; his face was bruised, and his head severely cut by the hoofs of the horse. Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, however, began with her whip to inflict a second chastisement on her prostrate enemy. A crowd, however, gathering round Nantouillet, the reins of her horse were seized by one of the cavaliers in attendance, and she was forced from the spot. Charles laughed at the adventure until his mirth alarmed those around. He, however, greatly lauded the spirit shown by Renée; and commanded that no one should dare to molest her for having so bravely avenged her wounded honour.[1]

The disgraceful assault on Nantouillet's mansion was still the prominent topic of discussion when the Polish ambassadors arrived. Accompanied by the ambassage, Montluc quitted Warsaw about the commencement of July, 1573. The principal envoys were the bishop of Posen,[2] Leczinski palatine of Siradia, Radzivill palatine of Wilna duc d'Olika, the palatines of Cracow, Kiov, Gnesen, Gourka palatine of Sandomeir, and five other illustrious Polish magnates. The document recording the election of the duke was enclosed in a silver casket of great price, and sealed with the signets of one hundred and ten palatines, castellans, and prelates.

On the 10th of August the ambassadors were received at Metz by the comte de Brienne, by Jean de Thevalle, and by the bishop of Langres, who pronounced an eloquent harangue of welcome. On the 19th day of the same month they entered Paris by the Porte St. Martin, where they were greeted by the prince-dauphin of Auvergne, the ducs de Guise, de

[1] Dreux de Radier: Vie de Renée de Rieux.

[2] Adam Cobarowski, bishop of Posen.

Mayenne, and many of the principal courtiers. The cortège of the ambassadors consisted of fifty carriages, each drawn by four horses. In the first coach rode the bishop of Posen chief of the embassy, accompanied by the bishop of Valence and his colleagues St. Gelais and de Noailles, and, by the palatine of Siradia. The ambassadors retired to the palace assigned for their occupation while resident in Paris, to prepare for their audience of the king on the following morning.

The bishop of Valence, meantime, proceeded to the Louvre, to render a personal account of his mission to their majesties, by whom he was received with the greatest distinction and favour. He next went to pay his respects to the king of Poland. Henry gave the able prelate whose eloquence had won him a crown an outwardly cordial greeting: "Nevertheless," says de Thou, "Monsieur was not glad, though he hid his true sentiments. Honourable as was the dignity conferred upon him, he regarded its acceptance as an exile. He was piqued at his brother's determination to banish him from the realm. This young prince, therefore, nurtured amid the luxuries and refinements of the court of France, saw himself most unwillingly doomed to inhabit such a country as Poland."

The same day, moreover, was distinguished by the entry into Paris of a papal legate-extraordinary, Seraphino Olivier, sent by pope Gregory XIII. for the double purpose of complimenting the king of Poland on his election; and to present the pontiff's congratulations to king Charles on his "victory" over his rebel subjects professing the reformed faith. The legate brought the golden rose annually consecrated, to present to the king of Poland in the name of his holiness. A service was therefore performed in the evening in the chapel of the Louvre, when Olivier delivered the pontifical gift, accompanying it with an

exhortation in which the zeal, piety, and ability of the newly-elected sovereign were highly eulogized. The legate, moreover, delivered to Henry a letter from the learned cardinal Osius, bishop of Varna, containing eloquent counsel concerning the future ecclesiastical administration of Poland. Henry replied to the address of Olivier with so much propriety and dignity, that several of the Polish ambassadors, who came *incognito* to witness the ceremony, departed prognosticating great prosperity for Poland under the sway of a monarch so apt and accomplished as was the brother of the Christian king Charles IX.

CHAPTER II.

1573 — 1574.

Reception of the Polish ambassadors at the Louvre—Their public progress through Paris—Interview with their newly-elected king—Stormy discussions—King Charles declines to ratify the articles of Sandomeir, and counsels his brother to suspend his ratification of the religious demands of his subjects—The Pacta Conventa—King of Poland swears fidelity to the constitution of his realm in Notre Dame—The ambassadors present the Decree of Election—Public entry of the king of Poland into Paris—Fêtes at court—Mission of M. de Rambouillet—His interviews with the princess Anne Jagellon—Departure of king Charles for Villars Cotterets—Depression of the king of Poland at quitting France—Anger of the king—His failing health—Speculations occasioned by that event—Charles commands his brother to quit the realm—Hesitation of the king of Poland—His superb cortège—Dangerous illness of the king—Parting interview between the brothers—Progress to Nancy—The court of Lorraine—The princess Louise—Her history—Sympathy demonstrated by the king of Poland—His proposal to the vicomte de Turenne—Conferences of Blamont—Designs of queen Catherine—Parting interview between Henry and the queen of Navarre—He bids farewell to his mother—Arrival of the king of Poland at Heidelberg—His reception and entertainment—Proceeds to Mayence, and from thence to the abbey of Fulda—Arrival of the king at Miedzirzeik—His reception—Harangue of the bishop of Wladislaw—Reply of M. de Pibrac—Departure of the king for Posen and the castle of Balize—Magnificent entry of the king of Poland into Cracow—Condescension of Henry's demeanour—His popularity—Hostile demonstration of the palatine of Cracow—Coronation of the king—Festivities of the Polish court.

THE Polish ambassadors the day following their entry into Paris had an audience of king Charles in the hall of the Louvre. The bishop of Posen addressed the king and presented the magnates his colleagues. His

harangue was spoken in Latin—it was most courtly in expression—and informed the king that, in obedience to his royal bidding, the duc d'Anjou had been elected their king. Charles replied also in Latin. He assured the ambassadors "that their presence inspired him with intense satisfaction; and that he should always remember with gratitude the magnificent present which, at his solicitation, the Polish nation had conferred upon a brother whom he dearly loved." The ambassadors next entered into discourse with some of the courtiers, and put many pertinent questions relative to France and its institutions. All the ambassadors were accomplished linguists, expressing themselves with facility in the Latin, German, and Italian languages. Several of the noblemen also spoke French "with a purity of accent," says M. de Thou, "as if they had been born on the banks of the Seine, instead of in those distant lands watered by the Vistula or the Dnieper."

Their audience with the king over, the bishop of Posen proceeded to visit the queen Elizabeth of Austria. The ambassadors were next conducted into the presence of Catherine de Medici. The address pronounced by the bishop before a princess so renowned was elaborate and eloquent. Catherine stood with great majesty of demeanour surrounded by her ladies, having at her right hand the duchesse de Retz. When the harangue concluded, the duchess, on a sign from her royal mistress, replied, speaking at great length, in Latin, and with such facility as to astonish the Polish lords.[1] Catherine, at the conclusion of this formal address, drew the bishop of Posen aside, and conversed with him privately in Italian.

The following day having been fixed for the audience of the ambassadors with their newly elected king, the

[1] The duchess was ever after designated by the ambassadors as "la Merveille du Monde."

ceremonial was ordered with the greatest magnificence. The ambassadors rode in procession on horseback, and made the circuit of the capital that they might be seen by all. Before each magnate marched his gentlemen and pages, arrayed in the colours of their lord—the cortège being preceded by officers carrying maces and banners. "All the inhabitants of the capital hastened to witness the spectacle so novel and imposing," writes a contemporary historian.[1] "The windows on the route of the ambassadors were crowded with spectators; the roofs of the houses were so laden with people that it was feared they would sink beneath the weight. From the streets, lanes, and suburbs issued forth multitudes, so that the ambassadors regarded in amazement the vast concourse. The Parisians, on their side, gazed with admiration on the stately stature of the Polish magnates, their majestic carriage, their long beards, their caps sparkling with rare gems, their scimitars, their bows and quivers full of arrows, their wide boots studded with spikes of iron, and their shaven crowns." The ambassadors wore robes of cloth of gold, ornamented with a deep border of sable or other furs. The bridles of their horses and their saddles were incrusted with jewels. After the ambassadors came the noblemen of the court, riding two and two. When the cortège arrived at the Louvre the envoys were received by the entire household of the newly elected king. They were then conducted to the presence of Henry. The bishop of Posen advanced and kissed the hand which Henry graciously extended. He then said: "Monseigneur, it having pleased Almighty God to take unto himself our king Sigismund Augustus II., the senate, nobles, and people of Poland, and of the grand duchy of Lithuania, after a due examination of suffrages, have

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii. Mezeray. Mathieu. Dupleix. Cheverny.

unanimously proclaimed you as king. We pray your majesty, therefore, to remember that, as it was by the repute of your goodness and virtues that we have thus committed to your hand the sceptre of our realm, so that it is alone by the practice of virtue and righteousness that you may govern and keep this said realm our gift. Furthermore, we pray your majesty to confirm and swear to the articles (of Sandomeir) accepted by your ambassadors, and presented by the senate; after which thing accomplished, we will proceed joyfully to the execution of that which has been intrusted to us by the said diet and people of Poland."[1] The admonitory tone of the bishop's address was not very pleasing to the ear of Henry, and seemed to him a foretaste of the unceremonious remonstrance with which he had been told the Polish magnates regaled their sovereign. He therefore shortly replied, "that he thanked God and the senate for his election to the crown of Poland, and that he would do all in his power to merit the good opinion of his subjects." Cheverny, the duke's favoured chancellor, then pronounced a long discourse in Latin. All the Polish nobles afterwards approached, and kneeling, kissed Henry's hand. The young king terminated the audience by familiarly taking the arm of the bishop of Posen, and leading him into the chamber of king Charles. In the evening there was a ball at the palace. The beautiful women, and the luxury and splendour of the scene transported the ambassadors. The palatine of Siradia, Leckzinski, could not refrain from expressing his rapture in words, as he contemplated the beauty of Marguerite de Valois,—"that divine woman," as he termed the queen. A less fervid tribute was paid to the charms of the princesse de Condé and her sister the

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii. Mezeray. Mathieu. Dupleix. Cheverny.

duchesse de Nevers.[1] The following morning the ambassadors repaired again to the Louvre, to pay their homage to the king and queen of Navarre, the prince de Condé, and the cardinal de Bourbon. All these personages had assembled in the apartment of queen Marguerite. The enthusiasm felt by the ambassadors for the beautiful sister of their sovereign was greatly augmented when Marguerite, on the termination of the harangue, stepped forward and replied for herself and the king her husband in excellent Latin, speaking with the greatest vivacity and grace of manner. She then presented to each her fair hand to kiss, and entered into discourse, conversing alternately in Italian and French.

During the afternoon of the same day a serious obstacle arose, which to the great satisfaction of the newly-elected king threatened to despoil him of his crown. The bishop of Posen sent to request audience of Henry to discuss the articles upon which his election was based; and to administer the oath exacted by the senate. Upon arriving at the Louvre the ambassadors were ushered into the presence of Henry, who was attended by Cheverny his chancellor, and by Réné de Villequier, first lord of the bed-chamber. In the apartment were also assembled king Charles's principal ministers of state—the chancellor de Birague, the bishop of Limoges, de l'Aubespine the keeper of the privy-seal, Morvilliers, Bellièvre, and Paul de Foix archbishop of Narbonne, an eloquent and virtuous prelate, and ambassador to the queen of England. The bishop of Posen, after briefly adverting to the principal points of the election, presented to Henry a list of articles which he was required to ratify by his signature. The principal of these stipulations regarded the annual transfer of the income arising from Henry's French

[1] Brantôme: Dames Illustres—Vie de Marguerite de Valois.

appanages into Poland; the payment of the debts of his predecessor Sigismund II.; the re-organization of the university of Cracow; the foundation of a new college for the instruction of his younger subjects; the construction of a fleet; and the negotiation of treaties, offensive, defensive, and mercantile, with France. Lastly, an additional and unusual clause was expressly added to this document, which was termed by the Poles the Pacta Conventa, demanding the toleration of all religious sects and institutions not forbidden by divine law. Henry unhesitatingly subscribed the majority of the articles presented; but excused himself from accepting the article concerning religious toleration until he had personally conferred with the diet. The palatine of Cracow, chief of the Polish Evangelicals, then presented the paper which Montluc had signed, in which he had also engaged that Charles IX., in return for his brother's election, should issue an edict of amnesty, guaranteeing to his subjects of the reformed faith the toleration of their religion, subject to no special political or social disabilities. The document was laid before Charles's ministers, who one and all disavowed its contents, protesting that never had the bishop of Valence such powers intrusted to him. The Polish ambassadors indignantly demanded that Montluc should be summoned. The bishop appeared, and unblushingly acknowledged that he had exceeded his instructions; because, said he, "I was compelled to make these promises to shut the mouths of the enemies of France; and to win over the Evangelical party, greatly alienated as they were by the rumours consequent on the massacre of Paris." The palatine of Cracow and his three colleagues who professed the reformed opinions replied with great asperity; commenting also bitterly on Henry's refusal to sign the article concerning religious freedom; and a scene of recrimination ensued. The

Evangelicals demanded that, unless the king and his brother confirmed the promises of the ambassador, Henry's election should be regarded as void. The bishop of Posen, and the palatine of Siradia, declined to assent to this proposition; and the conference broke up in confusion, the chancellor Birague undertaking to lay the conditions before king Charles, and to report his majesty's reply on the morrow.[1] During the same evening the papal legate and the nuncio Lauro,[2] nominated to proceed with Henry to Warsaw, visited the bishop of Posen. Their conference lasted for some hours, Leckzinski and the other Roman Catholic ambassadors being summoned. Lauro then repaired to the Louvre, and was admitted to audience by the king of Poland and subsequently by queen Catherine. The following day Charles sent for the ambassadors, and peremptorily refused to sanction the stipulations regarding France; and harshly expressed his displeasure that the Poles should presume to dictate relative to the internal affairs of his kingdom. The Lutheran ambassadors thereupon proposed to retire, and relinquishing their mission, return to Poland. A majority of the ambassadors, however, having previously been won over, decided that, as king Henry had unhesitatingly assented to the articles of the Pacta Conventa, and promised to confer with the senate on the question of toleration, they should not be justified in annulling the election of the diet because the king of France had refused to subscribe articles which alone regarded the administration of his kingdom. The palatine of Cracow then asked Charles to grant one favour to the

[1] Mezeray. De Thou, liv. lvii.

[2] This Vincent Lauro had first been physician to Antoine king of Navarre, and joined him in the persecutions inflicted on Jeanne d'Albret. He eventually took holy orders, and was elevated to the highest dignities of the church.

Polish Lutherans as an earnest of his future *bienveillance* —and this was, that his majesty would be pleased to command the duke of Savoy to release from prison the widow of Coligny; to give liberty to the admiral's son Charles, who was confined in the fort of Marseilles; and, moreover, to mediate between the duc de Montpensier and his daughter Charlotte,[1] then an exile on account of her change of faith. The king angrily denied the requests, saying, "that Poland had no interest or concern in these demands."[2] The same day the points under debate were adjusted to the pretended satisfaction of all the ambassadors—king Charles and the king of Poland strictly confining their concessions within the limits of the powers in reality intrusted to the bishop of Valence.

On the 10th day of September a solemn high mass was celebrated in the church of Notre Dame; after which Henry approached the altar, and with his hand resting on a copy of the Holy Evangelists, he swore to maintain the privileges, constitution, and liberties of his subjects of Poland, and of the grand duchy of Lithuania. King Charles next took oath to observe all that he had signed, conformably with the promises of the bishop of Valence and the sieurs de Noailles and de Lansac, his ambassadors to the Polish diet.[3]

There now only remained to present to the king of Poland the decree of his election to bring to a close the mission of the ambassadors. This ceremony was performed with great pomp at the Louvre,[4] in the pre-

[1] Abbess of Jouarre. See Life of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, tome ii. p. 318, for a relation of the circumstances of the evasion of mademoiselle de Montpensier.

[2] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii.

[3] Ibid. Mathieu. La Popelinière, liv. xxxvi. fol. 119, et suiv.

[4] Dépêche du Roi Charles IX. à M. de la Mothe, son ambassadeur en Angleterre: MSS. de St. Germain, Bibl. Imp., datée ce 15 jour de Septembre, 1573, No. 56. M. de Thou and other historians state that the ceremony was performed in the Palais, but the king expressly writes

sence of the king and queen, of Catherine de Medici, the king and queen of Navarre, the court of parliament, the municipality, and of ten thousand spectators. A platform of state was erected, upon which were placed two thrones and canopies—one surmounted with the fleur-de-lis, the other by the white eagle of Poland. The king and his brother having taken their seats, the approach of the ambassadors of Poland was announced by a prolonged flourish of trumpets and the beating of drums. The duc de Guise received them at the portal of the palace. The ambassadors marched two-and-two, led by the bishop of Posen, and Leckzinski, palatine of Siradia. Then followed two envoys, bearing on their shoulders the casket of silver-gilt containing the decree. This was deposited at the foot of the throne upon which sat Charles IX. The bishop then demanded whether his Christian majesty permitted the presentation of the decree of election to the Polish crown to his brother Henry. The same question was put to Catherine de Medici. The queen and her son having replied in the affirmative, the bishop of Posen, after a short speech, presented the important document to Henry, kneeling. Henry, after holding the decree for a few seconds, commanded the castellan of Sanock to read it aloud. Cheverny then pronounced an oration in his master's name; and the solemnity terminated by the intoning of the hymn 'Te Deum laudamus.'[1]

On the following day the king of Poland made his public entry into Paris armed *cap-à-pied.* He was received with acclamations by the people, with whom Henry was popular.[2] In the evening Catherine de

that it took place "à trois heures après midi dedans la grande salle de mon palais du Louvre."

[1] Dépêche de Charles IX. à son ambassadeur en Angleterre: MSS. de St. Germain, Bibl. Imp., datée ce 15 jour de Septembre, 1573.

[2] Ibid: même dépêche. Mezeray says that a mistake of the heralds in

Medici gave a ball and ballet at her palace of the Tuileries. "When the banqueting tables were withdrawn," says an eye-witness of the revel,[1] "there appeared a high rock, which slowly whirled round. Upon the summit of this rock sat sixteen beautiful nymphs, representing the sixteen provinces of France. The nymphs recited melodious verses, composed by Ronsard, commemorating the glories of the king of Poland and of the realm of France. The nymphs then descended and presented gifts to the said king. Afterwards they danced together. The beautiful order of their movements, their gestures, and extraordinary loveliness of face and figure afforded great delectation to the spectators." The gifts presented by the nymphs, who were personated by the most beautiful damsels of the court, consisted of medallions of gold, on which were engraved in relief the symbols of every province of France, with the distinguishing produce of each.[2]

Two envoys were the following day despatched into Poland with a recital of all that had been done—Sborowski to the Polish senate, for the ambassadors; and Nicolas d'Angennes, seigneur de Rambouillet, as the envoy of king Charles, to thank the diet for the election of the duc d'Anjou to the crown of Poland. Rambouillet arrived at the end of November at Gnesen, where he was hospitably entertained by the archbishop-primate, regent of the kingdom. From Gnesen the ambassador proceeded to Warsaw, to deliver a letter

blazoning the armorial devices of the new king gave rise to many sinister predictions.

[1] Brantôme: Vie de Catherine de Medici, Reine de France.

[2] Dépêche de Charles IX. à M. de la Mothe: MS. de St. Germain, Bibl. Imp. "Hier au soir," says the king, "la reine madame et mère fit son festin en son palais, où les Srs. Polonnois furent si bien traités, et recurent tant de plaisir, qu'ils dirent n'avoir jamais rien vu de plus beau, ni de si bien ordonné, demeurans très contents de l'honneur qu'ils reçoivent."

from the king of Poland to the princess Anne Jagellon. The princess, after the departure of the ambassadors for Paris, had been suffered to leave Blonie for Warsaw, to prepare for the final funeral obsequies of her brother Sigismund. The body of the deceased king had been transported to Cracow, and there lay in state, as was the custom in Poland, until after the election of a new king, when the coffin was deposited in the royal mausoleum beneath the choir of the cathedral. The princess received the French ambassador with much courtesy. She was attended by twenty-four ladies and by two senators. The costume of Anne and of her Polish ladies was singular. They were arrayed in black robes, over which, as a symbol of mourning, they wore cloaks of coarse sackcloth. "The princess is of little stature," writes Rambouillet to Henry; "her age is nearly fifty years, as one may read on her highness's features."[1] It must have increased the reluctance felt by Henry to quit the joyous realm of France, when he meditated on the alliance which his new subjects destined for him—one which, after his acceptance of the crown of Poland, he was almost bound to conclude —and contrasted the lovely face of Marie de Clèves with the homely person of the sister of his predecessor. The discourse between Rambouillet and the princess Anne was carried on in Italian. She asked many questions concerning the new king; and finally, when the ambassador took his leave, her highness gave him a letter to deliver to Henry. Rambouillet then proceeded to Cracow, where he pronounced a public harangue. He also presided at a council summoned to devise measures for the defence of the duchy of

[1] Lettre missive, contenant la description du royaume de Pologne d'un gentilhomme de la suite de M. de Rambouillet, datée de Cracovie le 12 Decembre, 1573. Camusat: Recueil de plusieurs Actes, Traités, Lettres missives, etc., depuis 1390, jusqu'en 1580, fol. 54, et seq.

Lithuania; as the czar of Muscovy, resenting the rejection of his son Ivan by the diet of Warsaw, threatened an invasion of that province at the head of a hundred and twenty thousand men. The intelligence greatly excited the fears of the Poles. The starost of Samogitia was appointed, with the concurrence of Rambouillet and the archbishop-primate, to take the command of a body of troops, which was sent to the frontier to watch the movements of the Muscovite; but further measures of defence were postponed until after the arrival of the king. A minute detail of all that he saw, and his own observations thereupon, was transmitted to France by the ambassador through a gentleman in his suite whose name is unknown. He stated that the country was flat, traversed by vast pine forests, but that the soil produced abundantly all kinds of grain. The air, Rambouillet reported, was pure and exhilarating, and the sky cloudless. "As for the inhabitants, I can testify that they are a brave, generous, and intellectual people. They eschew the immoderate use of wine, and other of our voluptuous usages.[1] They drink wine, beer, or mead indifferently at their public festivals. They commence these banquets at eleven o'clock before noon, and sit at table until one o'clock in the middle of the night. They pronounce a long harangue before they drink. The first toast is the king, and afterwards they drink to other princes and individual persons, all being performed in order and by rotation. Their meats are highly spiced, so that I can only compare their table to an apothecary's shop. Some of the Poles and Tartars drink burnt wine; others a strong brandy which they call *grisatra*. When they become intoxicated one can perceive flames issue out of their mouths as from a furnace—a thing which could scarcely be believed, were it not of such constant recur-

[1] Lettre missive: see last note.

rence in this country as to admit of no contradiction."

As soon as the ceremonies of Henry's recognition were over, king Charles quitted Paris for Villars Cotterets, resolved to put an end to the fêtes, which served his brother as a pretext to delay his departure for Poland. The most profound melancholy now overwhelmed Henry. France never possessed more charms, or offered before so many attractions to enhance his regret. Catherine also severely felt her approaching separation from her best beloved son: she wept while clasping Henry in her arms, protesting that the pain of farewell surpassed her most bitter anticipation. Moreover, the health of the king seemed rapidly declining. A fixed and sombre gloom oppressed his spirits. He lamented the loss of Coligny; and perpetually reproached his mother and his brother for, what Charles now designated "their abominable counsels" respecting the admiral, which he rightly declared was the cause of all.[1] Nevertheless, Charles desisted not from his stern enactments respecting his Huguenot subjects; and harshly dismissed the deputies from the Protestant leagues of Languedoc and Guienne who waited on his majesty at Villars Cotterets with certain articles of pacification which they implored might be vouchsafed.[2] A slow fever, attended by giddiness and occasional acute pains in the region of the heart, harassed the king and rendered him indisposed to transact public busi-

[1] "Madame, vous êtes cause de tout!" was the frequent reproach of the king to his mother.

[2] The king was so incensed at the presumption of these demands, that he sent for his mother to respond to the deputies. Catherine openly expressed her indignation: "Si Condé étoit en vie, et qu'il fut dans le cœur de la France, à la tête de 20,000 chevaux et de 50,000 hommes de pied, et maître des principales villes du royaume, il ne demanderoit pas la moitié de ce que ces misérables ont l'insolence de nous proposer!" exclaimed her majesty.—De Thou, liv. lvii.

ness. The excitement of the chase,[1] however, still maintained its ascendency: on his horse by five in the morning, Charles plunged into the thick coverts of his forests, riding with eagerness in pursuit of game, until both rider and horse often sank with exhaustion. At night the king's sleep was broken; sometimes he started from his pillow calling frantically upon his mother; at other times sobs and moans of bodily and mental anguish broke from his lips.

Such being the condition of king Charles, the crown of France, with its brilliant destinies, seemed to the king of Poland almost within his grasp. Miron, Henry's first physician, secretly communicated his belief to his royal master that the king could not survive six months. It was, therefore, privately represented to Henry by the maréchal de Retz, the duc de Nevers, and others, that by departing from the realm he ran extraordinary hazard of losing the crown of France altogether. The *liaison* of the duc d'Alençon with the faction denominated Les Politiques secured for the latter, in case of the demise of the king, the potent co-operation of the house of Montmorency in any designs he might harbour to supplant his brother. The Huguenots of France—a faction consisting of two-thirds of the population of the realm—hated the king of Poland, and had vowed to avenge the murder of Coligny and its subsequent catastrophes. It was, therefore, to be apprehended that the Montmorency and their partisans, uniting with the king and queen of Navarre, and supported by powerful foreign leagues, would conspire to exclude Henry from the crown, to place it on the head

[1] The nuncio wrote to the pope about this period that the king was destroying himself with the chase, and that he had recently killed five thousand dogs in its immoderate pursuit; and that his horses, which all became broken-winded, cost his majesty thirty thousand francs a year. —Archives du Vatican, quoted by Michelet: La Ligue et Henri IV.

of their nominal chief the duc d'Alençon—whose tolerant principles were on every occasion ostentatiously manifested. These speculations coincided too well with Henry's private sentiments not to arouse vivid alarm in his mind. Catherine, also, acknowledged their force; and dreaded the peril which, on the decease of king Charles, must threaten the interests of her son. Strong, however, in her maternal affection, and relying on her powers of discernment and energy, the queen assured her son that she would preserve for him his kingdom; and that while she existed no usurper should wield the sceptre rightfully his own by inheritance. She bade Henry fearlessly depart to his distant realm, relying on her love and sagacity to bring him back in triumph to her arms. Still Henry lingered; the Polish magnates, who waited his pleasure in Paris, expostulated; but the tears shed by the princess of Condé had more power to move than their appeals to his patriotism, or to his duty towards his newly adopted country. The king's equipage was prepared; the lords of his suite waited his summons to proceed to the German frontier; repeatedly did Henry visit his favourite haunts in the capital; and more than once had he wept a farewell with Marie de Clèves—and yet, in anguish, the king protested that the sacrifice of country and friends was an ordeal he could not support.

King Charles, however, impatiently noted his brother's delay and the regrets with which Henry's approaching departure from the realm inspired his orthodox subjects. "If my brother obtains my crown, which he covets, the fine expectations that people have formed respecting him will soon be dissipated!" exclaimed king Charles. "My brother's character will alone be appreciated when he rules."[1] The king at this period, therefore, intimated to his mother his resolve that

[1] Bibl. Imp. Fontanieu, 331-32 MSS.

Henry should leave before the coming festival of Christmas; and with a fierce oath he protested that he or his brother must quit the kingdom, and that without the delay of another month.[1] Catherine had journeyed to Villars Cotterets, to be present when the king received the deputies from the Huguenots of the southern provinces; and she had taken this opportunity to intercede that a further delay might be granted to Henry. When the queen remonstrated on Charles's unbrotherly vehemence, the king entered his cabinet and coolly ordered the ushers to close the doors, excluding in his passion Catherine herself by name from his presence. The following morning the king quitted Villars Cotterets without taking leave of his mother, and proceeded to Soissons, leaving a peremptory mandate "that the king of Poland and those who were to attend Henry should give him the rendezvous at Vitry, as it was his intention to escort his brother to the frontier, and there bid him farewell. The queen, alarmed at the determination shown by king Charles; and apprehensive lest in one of his gusts of fury he might sanction some enterprise against his brother's life or liberty, implored Henry at once to withdraw. She represented the danger of further incensing the king; and that his continued disobedience would effectually prevent her from serving his cause against the intrigues of the king of Navarre and the duc d'Alençon, by overthrowing her influence with Charles. Thus conjured by his mother, whom Henry revered as his best and most potent friend, the king departed from Paris on the 29th day of Sep-

[1] De Thou, liv. lvii. p. 15. "Le roy jura Dieu qu'il falloit que son frère ou lui sortissent à l'instant du royaume, et qu'en vain sa mère entreprendroit de l'empêcher. Catherine aimoit éperdûment Henri; à force de chercher des prétextes pour la retenir, elle se brouilla avec le roy," &c.—Mém. du Duc de Bouillon, année 1573. Mezeray: Grande Histoire.

tember. He was accompanied by the queen-mother, the king and queen of Navarre, and by the duc d'Alençon, who were to take leave of him at the frontier. Henry's cortège consisted of five hundred French cavaliers—amongst the most illustrious of whom were the maréchal de Retz, the ducs de Nevers and Mayenne, Réné de Villequier, Gaspard de Schomberg, the lords of Belleville, de Gordes, Quélus, Balzac d'Entragues, and the marquis d'Elbœuf. King Charles, however, on arriving at Vitry in Champagne had again fallen dangerously ill. Charles's malady was a fever, which lasted thirty hours, attended by dangerous swellings which covered his face, neck, and hands.[1] The sudden increase of the king's malady at Vitry gave rise to rumours most disparaging to the queen and to her son Henry. It was said by Charles's subjects of the reformed faith, that the symptoms of the king's malady indicated poison; and that the recent threats used by his majesty towards his mother, united to the extreme and singular reluctance shown by Monsieur to take possession of his Polish crown, were events of significant import. The opinion that Charles IX. came unfairly to his end, it must be owned, is strongly insisted upon by many contemporary historians. The king hated his mother, and that, had he lived, he would have eventually deposed her from power, is a fact

[1] "Le roy tomba malade à Vitry d'une fièvre pulmonique; les saignées et purgations furent inutiles et plusieurs le crurent ensorcelé."—La Popelinière, liv. xxxvii. fol. 189. "La fièvre ardente du roy dura 30 heures, et se termina en grosses et larges pustules et bubes qui luy sortirent partout le corps, bras, et mains, dont on a parlé diversement."—Villegomblain, *Mém.* p. 270. Davila, liv. v. p. 443 et seq. King Charles, however, writes with unbroken spirit from Vitry to his ambassador in England, urging him to complete the alliance then negotiating between queen Elizabeth and the duc d'Alençon, whom he seems determined also to exile from France.—Correspondance de Charles IX. avec M. de la Mothe-Fénélon.

universally admitted. Moreover, he had exiled his brother; and was about to give stability to his authority by a close union with the king of Navarre and the faction of Les Politiques—which, since the massacre of St. Bartholomew, comprehended the opponents of the government of Catherine and of her adherents Guise, Birague, Nevers, and de Retz. Catherine had, therefore, it was said, many cogent reasons for hastening the death of the king; for his demise insured the restoration of her ancient pre-eminence over the realm. Charles no longer cowered before his mother; he derided her predictions, jeered at her superstitious fancies, and seemed more than ever to seek the society of his consort and that of the king and queen of Navarre and the Montmorencies. But in discussing the probability that poison was used to shorten the days of the unhappy king in whose brief life such tragedies had accumulated, the weak and precarious condition of Charles's general health from his boyhood upwards must be considered. His constitution, never robust, had suffered irretrievable damage from the habits of early profligacy in which he had indulged. His tendency to pulmonary complaints had been increased by his constant use of a hunting horn, which always hung from his girdle. He ate little and drank still less; while his system, naturally weak, and unsustained by stimulus of any kind, often bordered on a state of collapse after one of his desperate feats in pursuit of the boar; or on the subsidence of paroxysms of fury, such as those which occasionally fired the brain of the unfortunate Charles. The king's malady while at Vitry appeared once to be of so doubtful a nature, that the duc de Guise, forseeing its ultimate result, counselled Henry to dismiss the Polish ambassage and to remain in France, offering to protect him with fifty thousand troops, if requisite, against his majesty's

resentment. Henry, however, after taking counsel with his mother, declined the offer, replying "that he preferred to quit the realm, though the cost might be to his disadvantage, rather than to disobey the king and the queen his mother, and plunge the kingdom into warfare."[1] The king of Poland, therefore, commanded Cheverny to repair to his apartment at five o'clock in the morning of the day which had been fixed for his departure for Nancy. Followed by this trusty ally Henry presented himself at the door of the king's bedchamber, to take leave of his brother, and to resign the seal and *bâton* of his high office as lieutenant-general of the realm. The king was in bed, complaining bitterly of his sufferings. Henry approached, and the brothers conferred together for a short time privately. Cheverny then advanced; and in his presence Henry resigned his *bâton*, and according to the statement of the former, prayed his majesty to confide it to the duc d'Alençon. The palpable insincerity of this prayer, one would almost suppose, must have prevented Henry from preferring such a petition, as no event could be more prejudicial to his interests than the elevation of the duc d'Alençon to supreme command over the armies of France. The king then embraced Henry, and the royal brothers, so bitterly alienated, parted.[2]

The king of Poland and queen Catherine were received with great magnificence by the duke of Lorraine

[1] Mém. de Cheverny, année 1573.

[2] Cheverny states that this leave-taking was most affecting. "Le roy se separa de son frère avec larmes, plaintes, et cris disant adieu à son bon frère qu'il craignoit ne revoir jamais! Cela porta doute à quelques uns s'il avoit autant de regret dudit department, vu les choses passées, et l'envie conçue contre le roy de Pologne, comme il en faisoit demonstration." Cheverny's conjecture must have been correct. Charles hated his brother too cordially to mourn his departure.

on their arrival at Nancy. A series of brilliant *fêtes* commemorated the visit of the court of France. The duchesse Claude, however, having just given birth to a daughter, was unable to grace the festivities with her presence. The task of receiving queen Catherine and her daughter Marguerite de Valois therefore devolved upon the comtesse de Vaudemont Catherine de Lorraine,[1] cousin-german of the duc de Guise and the consort of the uncle of the duc de Lorraine. At the first of these court-balls Henry's attention was attracted by a fair young girl in the train of the comtesse de Vaudemont, attired with simplicity, and who bore an extraordinary likeness to the princesse de Condé. Impetuous in all his actions, the king of Poland commanded that this lady should be presented to him in order that he might solicit her hand for the dance. When Henry's desire was gratified by the duc de Lorraine in person, he found, to his surprise, that she was the eldest daughter of the comte de Vaudemont[2] by his first wife Marguerite d'Egmont, sister of the count of Egmont, who perished on the scaffold in 1568 by command of the king of Spain. The princesse Louise de Lorraine was born at Nomeni on the 30th of April, 1553.[3] A few weeks after her birth she lost her mother; but in her father's second wife Jeanne de Savoye, sister of the duc de Nemours, the princess found the tenderest maternal care. When Louise had attained her fifteenth year the comtesse Jeanne died

[1] Catherine de Lorraine, second daughter of the duc d'Aumale, son of Claude first duc de Guise, by Louise de Brezé, daughter of Diane de Poitiers by her husband the comte de Maulevrier, grand-seneschal of Normandy.

[2] Nicholas de Lorraine, duc de Mercœur, comte de Vaudemont, uncle of Charles II., duc de Lorraine and regent.

[3] She was baptized at Nomeni on the 4th of May. Her godfather was the bishop of Toul, and her godmother Louise de Stainville, comtesse de Salins.

universally regretted, leaving by her marriage with the comte de Vaudemont three sons[1] and one daughter, Marguerite. For his third wife the comte de Vaudemont took a princess of his own race—a woman of great beauty, of stern uncompromising character, and whose aspiring spirit submitted before neither opposition nor difficulty. The countess Catherine made her husband the father of two sons and two daughters.[2] From her step-mother Louise experienced the most harsh treatment; while her father, enslaved by the beauty and address of his consort, refrained from interfering in her behalf. Seldom was the princess Louise suffered to participate in the diversions of the ducal court; for her step-mother dreaded the rivalry of her attractions.[3] She was often deprived of the luxuries and necessary appendages of her rank by the countess, who bestowed the privileges which ought to have appertained to the princess on her own daughters. Apartments had been assigned to Louise in a distant part of her father's palace, where she lived a life of retirement; her chief consolations being the society of her *gouvernante* mademoiselle de Changy; and the pleasure she experienced from the visits of her young brother the duc de Mercœur, the child of Jeanne de Savoye, who being the eldest son of his father, could not remain so utterly forsaken as was his less fortunate sister. From the seclusion of her life Louise acquired habits both sedate and serious: she was gentle in temper, sensitive,

[1] Philippe Emmanuel de Lorraine, marquis de Nomeni, duc de Mercœur; Charles cardinal de Vaudemont; and François marquis de Chaussins.

[2] Henri marquis de Mouy, comte de Chaligny; and Antoine de Lorraine, bishop of Verdun; and Christine and Marguerite Catherine de Lorraine.

[3] Dreux de Radier: Anecdotes des Reines et Regentes de France, tome v.

and pious.[1] She loved sedentary employments, and passed her days in alternate prayer, reading, and needle-work.[2] So few had been the joys of her life that Louise at seventeen contemplated the cloister as a future and most precious refuge from the neglect which surrounded her. In personal attractions, however, the princess Louise had no cause to repine at her lot. Her figure was slender and elegant;[3] her complexion was brilliant; and her features well formed, though not strictly beautiful. On so public an occasion as the visit of queen Catherine the comte and comtesse de Vaudemont had found it impossible to exclude their eldest daughter from participation in the festivities of the court; and Louise had consequently been commanded to appear in the train of her step-mother. Louise, however, had her triumph; during the three days of the sojourn of the court at Nancy the young king of Poland devoted himself exclusively to her service, and declared "that never had he gazed upon a fairer vision." He danced with the princess, escorted her abroad, and when he learned from the duc de Lorraine the persecution which she endured from her step-mother, Henry sharply intimated his contemptuous displeasure to madame de

[1] "Depuis l'age de douze ans elle alloit une fois la semaine en pélerinage à St. Nicholas, toujours à pied, souvent habillée en fille de village et accompagnée de ses filles, d'un gentilhomme et deux laquais, employant en aumônes, qu'elle faisoit elle-même 25 écus qu'elle avoit par mois pour ses menus plaisirs."—Mallet: Economie spirituelle, p. 139.

[2] "La princesse Louise était très belle, jeune, delicate, et très aimable. Elle ne s'adonnait à autre chose que de servir Dieu, aller aux dévotions, visiter continuellement les hôpitaux, passer les malades, ensevelir les morts, n'y omettant rien des bonnes et saintes œuvres qu'observoient les saintes dévotes, et bonnes dames de la primitive église."—Brantôme: Vie de Louise de Lorraine.

[3] "Elle avoit," says M. de Fontanieu (MS. Bibl. Imp. Portef. 335-6), "la figure noble, un visage régulier par les traits, mais pâle, sérieux, et sans beaucoup de vivacité."

Vaudemont. The attraction which Henry found in the society of Louise, however, was her likeness to the princesse de Condé, especially in the soft fascination of her manner. He pitied, besides, her forlorn condition, and on several occasions generously tried to ameliorate it through the authority of the queen his mother. Catherine, nevertheless, did not offer to receive mademoiselle de Vaudemont under her own protection. The queen avoided intimate associations with princesses of the house of Lorraine; so vivid was her majesty's recollection of the perils and mortifications which she had endured during the queenly sway of Mary Stuart. In the suite of the king of Poland was the young vicomte de Turenne, better known as the duc de Bouillon by his eventual union with the heiress of the French house of la Marck. M. de Turenne was the nephew of the maréchal de Montmorency.[1] Illustrious ancestry, chivalrous honour, and wealth being united in his person, his alliance had been much sought. At Nancy, therefore, the king of Poland proposed that M. de Turenne should rescue mademoiselle de Vaudemont from her painful position at the court of Lorraine by forthwith espousing her. "I respectfully dissented from this proposal," relates the duc de Bouillon in his Memoirs,[2] "not wishing at that time to enter into the bonds of matrimony. Moreover, I knew that my uncle

[1] Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, vicomte de Turenne, et depuis duc de Bouillon, was the son of François III. du nom vicomte de Turenne by Eléanore de Montmorency, eldest daughter of the constable Anne de Montmorency. He was born September 28, 1555, and married Charlotte de la Marck, heiress of Bouillon, in Oct. 1591. The duc de Bouillon was created a marshal of France by Henri IV. in 1592. The duke married, secondly, 1595, Elisabeth de Nassau, daughter of the prince of Orange. He had one son by his first wife. The child, however, died in 1594, a few months after his mother. By his second consort the duke had eight children: his second son was Turenne, marshal of France, of glorious memory. The duc de Bouillon died March 25, 1625, at Sedan.

[2] Mém. de Bouillon, année 1573.

M. de Thoré had some thought of soliciting the hand of mademoiselle de Vaudemont; and, therefore, did not wish to go against his design. I, moreover, believed that this marriage was offered to me for state reasons only, in order to separate me from Monsieur[1] and my uncles of Montmorency; that so, by allying me to the house of Lorraine, I should not aid in any design which the former might possibly form against the succession of the king of Poland."

The baptism, meanwhile, of the infant daughter of the duke of Lorraine was celebrated with great splendour, the Polish magnates presenting her at the font on behalf of the realm of Poland.[2] Her other sponsors were Christine, duchess-dowager of Lorraine, and queen Catherine. The royal party, with the duchess Claude, then proceeded to Blamont, a beautiful domain belonging to the duke. Here several political conferences of the highest moment were holden between Catherine, Henry, Cheverny, count Louis of Nassau, and the duke Christopher, son of the elector-palatine, who had journeyed to meet their majesties at Blamont. Of all the plots and counter-plots which agitated the mind of Catherine de Medici, the design discussed at Blamont rivalled in astuteness all previous combinations. Catherine possessed no religious or political principle: the expediency of the moment and the power of circumventing the machinations of those opposed to her by any weapons or moral perjury whatever, had been the invariable rule of her administration. The queen had

[1] The duc d'Alençon.

[2] De Thou, liv. lvii. The infant was named Christine; she was the eldest of the three daughters of Claude de France and the duc de Lorraine. Christine espoused Ferdinand grand-duke of Tuscany. Her twin sisters Elizabeth and Antoinette married, the one Maximilian duke of Bavaria, and the other, the princess Antoinette, Guillaume duke of Clèves.—Ste. Marthe: Hist. généalogique de la royale Maison de France.

caused her son Henry to be hailed as chief of the grand orthodox party in the realm: but the massacre of Paris having temporarily prostrated the Huguenot faction, rendered that imposing title a shadow—for no hostile league threatened as heretofore the destruction of the true church with the monarchy. Henry, therefore, had fallen from his altitude as chief of a party, to rest on his simple prerogatives of first prince of the blood. A third faction, meantime—that of Les Politiques—had risen unexpectedly, which, with other important elements, embodied the shattered remnants of Coligny's league: of this the duc d'Alençon had been declared chief and leader, and thus he in his turn had climbed to that eminence from whence Henry had been hurled. Two factions again dominated over the realm—the king at the head of the orthodox; the duc d'Alençon chieftain of the opposing league—while Henry's hard portion was exile and the crown of the Jagellons. The Huguenot league, it was true, had been destroyed by Henry; but his success had lessened instead of amplifying his political influence. Catherine, however, determined that her beloved son should again be able to compete with the royal authority. To achieve this design, however, she perceived that the source of his former power, the Calvinistic league, must revive—to be reorganized with the important alteration, that Henry, by the most shameless of political retrogressions, should place himself at the head of the decimated legions of the Huguenots, and once more foster their hostility to the royal power, as administered by the princes of Guise. The indemnity which the queen designed for her third son was to afford every facility towards the furtherance of his suit for the hand of Elizabeth of England—a negotiation then pending. The queen accordingly, as soon as the election of the king of Poland was ratified, and he had received commands

from king Charles to proceed to his realm, despatched Gaspard de Schomberg to the prince of Orange, chief of the confederates in the Netherlands, to propose articles; and to negotiate that the command of the Protestant armies of the Low Countries might be bestowed on her son the king of Poland![1] The queen calculated that in case success attended the negotiation, Henry need only repair to a Flemish province adjacent to France, where he would be at hand to watch the progress of affairs; while a large section of his new subjects favouring reform, would behold with surprise and approbation the so-called religious apostacy of their monarch. Schomberg negotiated with such dexterity, that he actually induced the prince of Orange and the other heads of the league to discuss Catherine's proposals—a fact which is not the least marvellous incident of the project. Articles were moreover drawn, to be signed by the two high contracting parties, when the decease of Charles IX. caused the negotiation to be relinquished. The minute evidence which exists concerning the details of this intrigue, would seem to vindicate the queen from the charge of having conspired to hasten the decease of her son the king; for Catherine's anxiety to advance her secret negotiation with the Flemish lords of the Confederation would have been a useless zeal, had the queen possessed certain

[1] "La reyne vouloit mettre le roy de Pologne à la tête des confédérés, mais le comte Louis de Nassau lui préféroit le duc d'Alençon. Dans cette vue elle chargea Schomberg de négocier avec le prince d'Orange de lui faire donner le commandement des forces des confédérés, où elle comptait qu'il pourroit se rendre avec une flotte bien équipée."—De Thou, liv. lvii. p. 15. "On envoya le comte de Retz en Allemagne faire des levées. On eu des conférences à Blamont. Au reste Nassau n'avait réellement cherché qu' à flatter la reyne, sachant bien que quelque chef qu'on mit à la tête des confédérés, le prince d'Orange en seroit toujours le maître." Nassau had also secret conferences while at Blamont with the duc d'Alençon, Turenne, la Mole, and other political enemies of the king of Poland.

knowledge that Henry's accession to the throne of France was not a distant event. One of the prime secrets, however, of Catherine's political successes was, that the queen never held a thing to be accomplished until she beheld its consummation; while morally certain as she might feel of eventual triumph in any project, she acted as if prepared for defeat, and skilfully provided an antidote.

The last week in November the king of Poland resumed his journey. On bidding his sister Marguerite farewell, Henry in vain tried to awaken the affection she had once borne him. He appealed to the memories of their youthful days at Amboise; and then skilfully alluded to Marguerite's personal interests, which he argued would profit greatly by a second *entente cordiale*. The queen of Navarre, however, had suffered too deeply from his past unmerited desertion to put faith again in Henry's asseverations. Marguerite's adieux, therefore, were very composed; and she witnessed her brother's departure with an equanimity which Henry subsequently fully repaid.[1] The parting between queen Catherine and her son, however, was sorrowful and very tender. "Catherine," says De Thou, "conversed long and privately with her beloved son; and shedding many tears, she at length suffered him to depart."

On leaving Blamont the king of Poland, escorted by his numerous French suite and by the Polish ambassadors, journeyed to Saverna, a castle appertaining to the bishop of Strasburg. On the following morning Henry proceeded to Landau; from whence, at the special invitation of the elector-palatine, he visited Heidelberg. The mind of the elector was still sorely exasperated at the bloody proscription of Paris; and so vivid was his resentment, that he seems to have invited Henry solely for the purpose of demonstrating his

[1] Mém. de la Reine Marguerite, liv. i. De Thou.

anger and contempt in the presence of some of the chief offenders. A league from Heidelberg the king of Poland was met by a squadron of cavalry two thousand strong, which advanced at a gallop, and surrounded the cortège. On entering the streets of the city Henry found them lined with troops; while in the principal squares and on the surrounding heights cannon was posted, with gunners holding lighted matches. On arriving in the courtyard of the castle all was silent and desolate; no signs of preparation being perceptible for the king's reception. Henry descended from his coach, and as cowardice was not his foible, he boldly ascended the steps leading to the portal of the castle. He had not proceeded far when the Rhinegrave, with two gentlemen, refugees from the massacre of Paris, appeared and delivered a message from the elector to the effect, "that he supplicated his majesty to excuse him, as severe indisposition prevented him from descending."[1] Henry merely bowed in acknowledgment of this notification. Continuing his progress, he found the elector supported by two gentlemen at the door of the saloon. On the wall opposite hung a gigantic painting representing the death of Coligny. The first compliments over, the elector, perceiving that the eyes of the young king were fixed on the picture, abruptly demanded "whether his majesty recognised the personages depicted therein?" Henry coldly answering in the affirmative, the elector retorted, "Those persons, sire, who caused the death of so many valiant captains, are to be deemed truly miserable. They were indeed true men and brave soldiers!" The king replied, "That there could be no doubt that the will being there, they might have served

[1] Mathieu: Hist. du Règne de Charles IX., liv. vi. p. 363. Mémoire de la Conférence qu'eut Henri III. avec l'Electeur-Palatin Fréderic III. à Heidelbourg, ecrite en Allemand de la propre main de Fréderic: Monumenta Pietatis et Literaria—Francfort, 1701.

his Christian majesty valiantly and well." At the banquet the majority of the elector's guests were survivors of the massacre—persons who had witnessed its terrors. The duc de Nevers states that he frequently heard the words whispered, "*Ces bouchers de Lorraine! ces traîtres Italiens!*"[1] The following morning the elector invited the king of Poland and the principal lords of his suite to inspect his picture-gallery. He first displayed a number of portraits of various degrees of merit; then suddenly he drew aside a curtain and displayed a picture of Coligny. "Of all the French nobles whom it has been my fortune to entertain, I esteem, sire, the original of this portrait to have been most zealous for the glory and welfare of his country; neither do I hesitate to affirm that his loss is a public calamity which his Christian majesty will never be able to repair."[2] Henry replied with great spirit and presence of mind to this observation; but soon after retired in much displeasure to his apartments. The next morning he took leave of his host, after first causing mass to be celebrated in his chamber.[3] When this came to the knowledge of the fiery old elector, he burst into a transport of passion, vowing that sooner than have had his castle desecrated by such idolatry, he would have burnt it to the ground.

Henry continued his journey, leaving Heidelberg on Sunday the 13th of December, and proceeded to Mayence. He was received with great pomp by the archbishop-elector. After a brief sojourn, the king repaired to Frankfort, and from thence to the ancient abbey of Fulda, where he spent the festival of Christmas. On

[1] Meaning the princes of Guise, and Catherine and her Italian counsellors Nevers, Gondi, Birague, &c.

[2] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps. Mathieu.

[3] "Le roy crut que par ce seul acte il s'étoit assez vengé de toutes les braveries de l'électeur."

the 31st of December the king arrived at Torgaw, and from thence traversed the domains of the elector of Saxony, escorted by two thousand horse under the command of John Casimir duke of Bavaria. At Loburg in Brandenburg Henry was received by the duke of Prussia,[1] then the vassal and ally of the crown of Poland; and thus escorted he arrived at Frankfort-on-the-Oder on the 23rd day of January, 1574, having thus safely traversed the Germanic empire in the space of six weeks.

At Miedzirzeik on the Oder, the first town of the palatinate of Posen, the king of Poland was received by a deputation of his subjects, at the head of which was the bishop of Wladislaw. Henry dismounted from his horse as the deputies drew near on foot. The bishop approached, and greeting Henry with an eloquent harangue, he thanked God that Poland was at length blessed by the presence of a prince so renowned for piety, valour, learning, and chivalry. He promised in the name of the diet obedience and honour to the person and mandates of the sovereign, "as, sire, time and experience will demonstrate." Guy de Faur, seigneur de Pibrac, whose eloquent apology for the massacre of Paris, circulated throughout Poland by Montluc, had already eminently served Henry's cause, then replied in a Latin oration to the address of the deputation. He drew a glowing picture of the virtues and accomplishments of the young king, comparing him to a bridegroom journeying to meet his bride, the fair realm of Poland. He stated that Henry had been taught from his birth to prefer religion to earthly ad-

[1] Albert Frederic duke of Prussia. This prince became insane. He married Marie Eléonore de Clèves et Juliers, and their only child the princess Anne espoused the elector John Sigismund of Hohenzollern-Brandenburg, and carried the duchy of Prussia to the house of Hohenzollern.

vantages; but that, having witnessed the unparalleled woes of civil warfare, he was very firmly resolved so to govern that his reign might be distinguished for its pacific and tolerant principles. Finally, Pibrac thanked the Poles for the preference they had shown for the house of Valois; and stated that Henry desired to acknowledge his obligations to the entire nation, and to no faction or individual in particular.[1] This address, pronounced in a very fluent and engaging manner, enchanted the deputies, who responded by loud acclamations. Henry then repaired to Posen. The following day he pursued his journey to Balize, a castle belonging to the palatine of Cracow, and situated about a league and a half from that capital. The weather was very rigorous; and the snow lay so deep on the ground, that the cortège of the king was preceded by a train of pioneers, to cut a road.

At Balize Henry remained until he made his public entry into Cracow for the ceremony of his coronation. On the afternoon of the 17th of February, 1573, this pompous ceremony commenced. Its arrangements were made with such skill, order, and effect, as to astonish the French in Henry's suite: moreover, the martial and semi-barbaric splendour of the ceremonial differed so greatly from the pageants of the court of France, as to elicit the greatest curiosity and interest.

The ceremonial commenced by the arrival of the archbishop of Gnesen, primate of the realm, at Balize.[2] He was preceded by two hundred jagers, in uniforms of green velvet, carrying lances from which floated the

[1] Pascal: Vie de Pibrac.

[2] The archbishop of Gnesen had many peculiar privileges. When he rode abroad he was preceded by mace-bearers, and his repasts were always publicly announced by a *réveille* of drums and trumpets. The Polish-lords delighted in sumptuous ceremony; their wives never went abroad without a train of footmen and pages, dwarfs and torch-bearers.

banner of Poland. These soldiers were armed with breast-plates of mail; they wore helmets, and carried a shield of extraordinary dimensions. The heads of their horses were adorned with plumes and an abundance of bells, which as the horsemen rode clashed and jingled. Their trappings were of cloth of gold, and their saddles were covered with bear-skins. In a carriage drawn by eight horses rode the archbishop of Gnesen, with the bishops of Posen and Plock. The archbishop of Limburg, accompanied by the bishops of Cracow, Wladislaw, and Comin, followed, escorted by two hundred soldiers in Italian uniforms. The prelates were admitted into the presence of the king; and the bishop of Plock invited his majesty, in the name of the diet, to enter the royal city. Henry then descended to the court of the castle, and mounted a horse magnificently accoutred. Next to the king's person rode the ducs de Nevers and de Mayenne; then came the marquis d'Elbœuf and the maréchal de Retz; and following, the French lords of his suite, two and two. As Henry thus sallied forth at the head of this princely cortège, the majesty of his demeanour inspired the spectators with admiration; so that with one voice they proclaimed him worthy to challenge the homage of the valiant warriors around, the pride of Poland. Immediately preceding his majesty, who rode alone and in advance, was the archbishop of Gnesen and the prelates his colleagues.

When the king emerged from the gates of the castle of Balize, a scene presented itself which Henry afterwards frequently cited as the most imposing and magnificent he had ever witnessed. The road was lined on both sides with palatines and nobles, each at the head of his vassals. Every company as the king appeared rode forwards, presented arms, and waved its banners; and after saluting his majesty, wheeled off to the rear of

the cortège, its chieftain taking his place between two of the French nobles. Each company was headed by a standard-bearer and by a band of musicians, which, after his majesty had saluted the troops, kept up a ceaseless clash of cymbals, trumpets, and horns. The first of these bands was that of the palatine of Cracow, marshal of the realm. It consisted of three hundred men-at-arms in Tartar and Hungarian uniform. The troop saluted his majesty with shouts and hurling of spears, which were dexterously caught and thrown back to their owners, while the palatine rode forwards and placed himself between the ducs de Nevers and de Mayenne. The next band was that of Gourka palatine of Sandomeir. It numbered two hundred and fifty men, wearing Tartar accoutrements, their saddle-bows and shields being adorned with leopard skins and eagle plumes. Then followed the palatine of Calinski with a troop of Huns. The palatine of Siradia, Leckzinski, appeared, leading a band of Hungarian and Polish troopers. The housings of their horses sparkled with jewels, gold, and embroidery. Then came the palatines of Podolia, Kiov, Marienburg, Wilna, and Culm, the starost of Samogitia, and the lords of the king's Polish household, each at the head of his vassals. The municipality and university of Cracow appeared at the gates of the city to salute the king, who rode at the head of this magnificent cavalcade. Whilst Henry listened to the harangue of welcome pronounced by the university orator, the cortège was reviewed by Oppalinski marshal of the court, preparatory to its passage through the streets of Cracow.[1]

At the gate of St. Florien the city guard, consisting of two hundred horse and three thousand infantry, was

[1] Discours de l'Entrée et Couronnement de Henri Roi de Pologne: Camusat. Recueil de Lettres, etc., depuis 1390 jusqu'en 1580, fol. 57, et seq. De Thou: Hist. de son Temps.

drawn up to receive the king, each man bearing a torch, as daylight was beginning to wane. The foreign ambassadors here met the king, and preceded him to the cathedral. Henry entered Cracow beneath a canopy of cloth of gold, borne by the chief municipal authorities. The city was brilliantly illuminated, and salutes of cannon were fired at intervals. His majesty passed beneath arches of ingenious construction, laden with mottoes, portraits, and inscriptions, all surmounted by the white eagle of Poland. "Never before was seen," recounts an eye-witness, "so noble a pageant; the multitudes of troops arrayed in costumes at once warlike, barbarous, and magnificent; the majestic mien of the Polish senators; the Babel of tongues; the ceaseless clash of cymbals, kettle-drums, and other instruments; the sea of banners, the end of which could not be descried;—all formed a *coup-d'œil* at once novel and surprising to our cavaliers of France." Thus conducted, Henry alighted at the portal of the cathedral dedicated to St. Stanislaüs. A *Te Deum* was then chanted by the choir, after which the king paid a visit to the tomb of his predecessor Sigismund II. Henry then retired to the palace, where he entertained the chief personages of the senate at a banquet.

The following day, which was Friday, February 18th, the king proceeded in state to the senate. Pibrac pronounced the oration, which was heard with satisfaction. The senators then kissed his majesty's hand. Henry next sent a complimentary message to the princess Anne; but made no solicitation to obtain an interview. The next day the nobility of Poland deputed a personage to compliment Henry in their name, and to assure him of their affection, loyalty, and fidelity. The reply made by Henry in person was deemed appropriate and flattering. Henry had hitherto given his new subjects unmitigated satisfaction, except in the matter of

religious toleration. His promises on this subject, however, had been satisfactory enough; but he had as yet declined to affix his sign manual to the stipulations demanded by the Evangelical party in his realm. With the adulations lavished upon Henry, therefore, mingled the murmurs and suspicions of the reformed party. Their indignation had been extreme at the unequivocal rejection by Charles IX. of their stipulations respecting their French brethren; nor had they failed to sympathize cordially in the protestations and regrets of the palatine of Cracow. Nevertheless, Henry's fascinating deportment, the tact and amiability which he displayed in all his dealings with the Polish magnates—"those haughty nobles who treat their king as an equal, rather than demean themselves as his subjects"—his wealth and august descent, as yet enlisted the majority of suffrages. The fame of Henry's military exploits also invested him in the eyes of a martial nation with additional claims to admiration. Catherine de Medici, moreover—that master-mind so skilful in its discernment of the foibles of mankind—had well chosen the personages to attend her favoured son, on his first introduction to his new subjects. In Henry's suite was the duc de Nevers, the subtle and unscrupulous statesman, of polished manner and imperial descent; Pibrac, the learned jurisconsult, and eloquent orator; de Retz, the queen's peculiar *protégé*, a noble initiated in the designs of his royal mistress, and the husband of the most witty and learned lady of the court of France. Then the queen had sent Schomberg, the warrior and diplomatist; and Mayenne, the brother of the duc de Guise, an envoy peculiarly acceptable to the Catholic party in Poland. And last, though not least in importance, Catherine had nominated as king Charles's resident ambassador at Cracow the learned and astute statesman Pomponne

de Bellièvre,[1] on whose counsels the queen admonished her son to rely. All that could flatter the national and personal vanity of the Poles had been designed and ably accomplished by queen Catherine.

The reformed party, however, not having obtained their demands, were inclined to scrutinize the motives and future intentions of their newly-elected king. The palatine of Cracow, whose ire was strongly kindled at the rejection of the archduke's claims by the diet; and who still chafed at the memory of the imperious language addressed to him by king Charles while in Paris, declaimed against what he termed "the dissimulation and double-dealing of the French;" and insisted that the articles of Sandomeir should be ratified and sworn to by the king previous to his coronation. "Once crowned, Henry will jeer at our demands," exclaimed the stern old palatine, "therefore whilst it is time let us bind this cunning trickster! Each day," continued he, "is not the same day. Those who have been nominated to supreme dignities have not always had the address to keep them."[2] No tumults, however, ensued—the dissidents were too few in number to venture upon a demonstration; while the enthusiasm of the orthodox party was not diminished by the uncourteous demeanour of the palatine.

Henry, meanwhile, prepared for the solemnity of his coronation, which was to take place on Quinquagesima Sunday. The previous evening, Saturday, February 19th, 1574, the king, attended by the legate and all the bishops in Cracow, proceeded on foot to a sacred grotto dedicated to St. Stanislaus, the patron saint of

[1] "Bellièvre étoit le plus homme de bien que je vis jamais dans le conseil du roi, car il ne vouloit que choses bonnes, justes, et honnêtes," says the learned Etienne Pasquier in his Epistles.

[2] De Thou, liv. lvii. Vie de Pibrac, par Charles Pascal.

Poland, where he heard vespers. That evening the king confessed and fasted, preparatory to the ceremony of his consecration.

On the coronation morning the king was conducted to the cathedral by a procession of nobles and prelates. "Never was there seen anything more sumptuous than the equipages of these nobles," writes a French spectator of the pageant. "The lords were mounted on horses having housings of cloth of gold beset with jewels. Before these magnates marched from two to three hundred gentlemen, some arrayed in cloth of silver, others in mantles of wolf-skin or sable." When mass was said, the king ascended a platform reared in the centre of the cathedral, attended by the officers of state. The archbishop of Gnesen had commenced the coronation service, when a great tumult arose in the cathedral, and a body of armed men made towards the royal platform—an advance repulsed by the halberdiers. A few moments of suspense and consternation ensued. The palatine of Cracow then boldly presented himself; standing on the steps of the altar so as to be seen by all, he exclaimed in a loud voice, addressing the personages in the assembly of his own persuasion. "It is in vain that we make boast of our liberty, if now by infamous silence we condemn ourselves to slavery! To what purpose have the just and equitable demands of our nobles been preferred, if the king derides and refuses to receive them. The acceptance of the conditions which we proposed was delayed until after the arrival of the king. Behold the king! Every mark of sovereign dignity has been conceded to him—everything granted that can consolidate his authority, and there is no mention made of the articles sworn to in his name and behalf! I will not tolerate a longer delay! Let the king now ratify and swear

to these said conditions, or I protest against and forbid his coronation!"[1] Upon these words a great outcry rose throughout the church; the nobles of the Evangelical faction gathered round their champion, the prelates suspended their prayers and retreated to the altar, and the French nobles drew their swords and placed themselves round the person of the king. The palatines of Siradia, Sandomeir, and other orthodox magnates left their places and proceeded to address the malcontents, who, unsupported by the people, were soon driven from the choir to the nave of the cathedral, where they maintained a clamorous expostulation. The king, after exchanging a few words with the duc de Nevers and with Pibrac, took his seat on the throne with great composure of manner. Pibrac then addressed thus the archbishop of Gnesen: "Monseigneur Reverendissimo, for what do we tarry? the king commands you to perform the ceremony for which we are here assembled; as for the rest, his majesty will take an early opportunity of consulting his senate." The archbishop replied, "I demand nothing better, monseigneur: I am ready to perform his majesty's behest."

The choir then chanted a canticle; after which the ceremony of the coronation proceeded, the palatine of Cracow quitting the cathedral without offering further defiance. The oaths ordinarily taken by the monarchs of Poland were then administered to Henry—words being only added by which the king bound himself to maintain concord between his subjects professing different religions.[2] The grand maréchal Oppalinski then, in the absence of the palatine of Cracow, demanded of the assembly whether it were willing that the ceremony

[1] La Vie et Mœurs de Messire Guy du Faur, Seigneur de Pibrac, par Charles Pascal—Paris, 1617.

[2] "Pacem inter dissidentes de religione tuebor et mana tenebo."

should proceed. Unanimous assent being given by the majority, Henry was anointed, crowned, and enthroned. He afterwards accepted the homage of the senate, prelates, and minor nobles, and bestowed the honour of knighthood upon several.

The following day Henry received the allegiance of the municipality of Cracow and Warsaw, and of the heads of the chief judicial courts of the realm. The ceremony was performed publicly on an elevated stage raised in the principal square of Cracow. On Shrove Tuesday the king went to the first fête which he graced with his presence in Poland. Political forethought, as well as the anticipation of pleasure, in this instance induced Henry's condescension. The daughter and heiress of the palatine of Cracow, the king's determined foe, was married on that day to Sborowski, castellan of Oderberg. The king, therefore, intimated that, as a gracious act of oblivion, he intended to honour the ball given on the evening of the nuptials of mademoiselle Dambrovicz with his presence. At this fête Henry first met the princess Anne Jagellon; and his majesty danced several times, taking as his partner either the princess or the bride.

On Ash Wednesday the festivities of the coronation of the king of Poland terminated with a joust on foot in the courtyard of the castle—or, rather, it was intended that one should have been holden. It happened that the comte de Tenczin lord chamberlain, entering the lists with his troop of knights, found Nicholas Sborowski, the brother of the castellan of Oderberg, who had taken his position beneath the royal balcony. A dispute arose upon some insignificant question of precedence, when the companies of men-at-arms, at a signal from their chieftains, attacked each other, and a fight in good earnest ensued. Six or

seven persons were slain before the fray could be quelled by a body of troops sent by the king to arrest the parties who had resorted to arms within the precincts of the royal palace. One castellan was killed by a blow from a battle-axe; while Sborowski himself was severely wounded in the thigh by a pistol-shot. This riotous onslaught was Henry's first initiation into the customs and hardy recklessness of the people whose allegiance he had so reluctantly accepted.

CHAPTER III.

1574.

Departure of queen Catherine from Lorraine—She insists on the dismissal of the comte de la Mole from the service of the duc d'Alençon—Character of la Mole—Condition of parties in the realm—The duc d'Alençon—His projects and counsellors—Advice of the maréchal de Montmorency—Enterprise of Ventabren—The duke of Lorraine nominated as lieutenant-general—Correspondence of Monsieur—Enterprise of St. Germain—Flight of the court—Measures of the queen—The king of Navarre and Monsieur placed under surveillance—Departure of the queen for Paris—Condition of the princes—Alliance between Monsieur and his sister Marguerite—Progress of the civil war—Contemplated flight of Monsieur—Arrest of the maréchals de Montmorency and Cossé—Numerous arrests—Imprisonment of the king of Navarre and Monsieur—Their depositions—Trial of la Mole and Coconnas—Their execution—Decline of the king's health—His last hours—Death of Charles IX.—His character—Conjectures relative to his demise—Vigorous measures of the queen—Proclamation of her regency—Her arrival in Paris—She despatches couriers to Poland—Extraordinary precautions adopted by the queen—The correspondence of Catherine with foreign ambassadors.

QUEEN Catherine, after bidding farewell to the king of Poland, set out from Blamont on her return to join king Charles, who had so far recovered from his illness as to have been able to quit Vitry for Rheims. At Bar-le-Duc the queen made her first move in that intricate combination which, according to her solemn promise to Henry, was to frustrate the intrigues of his enemies and triumphantly bring him back to ascend the throne of his ancestors. The duc d'Alençon had a favourite gentleman, one Joseph Boniface, seigneur

de la Mole, to whom he imparted most of his schemes, as such was the weakness of the duke's character that a secret oppressed him, and he was never easy until he had divulged it. This la Mole was the most consummate *petit maître* of the court. Vain, foppish, frivolous, and fitted only to figure in a court ballet, la Mole, nevertheless, aspired to political pre-eminence, and had plunged into the perilous vortex of intrigue. Charles IX., who detested the race of sycophants of which la Mole was the type, had, it is said, twice during the siege of La Rochelle commanded his brother Henry to strangle M. d'Alençon's gentleman. His majesty even once plotted to hang la Mole with his own royal hands.[1] Fortunately, the latter escaped the ambuscade posted in one of the galleries of the Louvre to seize him as he passed to his apartment, by paying an unexpected visit to the queen of Navarre, by whom la Mole was greatly favoured. This preference which was imprudently evinced by Marguerite greatly incensed king Charles and his mother. Moreover, as the princess de Condé passed much of her time in the society of the queen of Navarre, the duc d'Anjou, before his departure from the realm, had manifested extreme jealousy at the pleasure with which Marie alluded to the attentions of la Mole. While the court sojourned at Blamont the duc d'Alençon, suspecting that it was the design of the king of Poland and of the

[1] Le roy sachant que la Mole étoit en la chambre de madame de Nevers dans le Louvre, qu'il avec luy le duc de Guise, et certains gentilshommes jusques à six, ausquels il commanda sur la vie d'étrangler celuy qu'il leur diroit avec des cordes, qu'il leur distribua. En cet equipage le roy luy même portant une bougie allumée, disposa ces compagnons bourreaux sur les brisées, que la Mole souloit prendre pour aller à la chambre du duc d'Alençon son maître, mais bien prit au pauvre jeune homme qui au lieu d'aller à son maître, il descendit trouver sa maîtresse (Marguerite de Valois) sans rien savoir toutesfois de cette partie.—Mém. pour l'Histoire de France, p. 63.

queen his mother to supplant him in his perilous pre-eminence as nominal chief of the Malcontents, despatched la Mole on a secret mission to meet the count of Nassau before the latter arrived to confer with Catherine. This expedition soon became known to the queen; so transparent generally were the plots of the duc d'Alençon. Many reasons, therefore, combined to determine Catherine to rid herself of la Mole. At Bar-le-Duc, therefore, she desired the duke to dismiss his gentleman, adding, "that la Mole was a firebrand, and that it was owing to his pernicious counsels that M. le duc had not always demeaned himself respectfully towards the king of Poland as it was his duty to do."[1] The duke resisted his mother's command, and even intimated that her majesty had him not as much in her power as she imagined; and, finally, he peremptorily declined to obey.

The departure of the king of Poland, meanwhile, raised the hopes of the disaffected of the realm. The Protestant league redoubled its activity to win recruits to the cause. Secret assurances were given to the duc d'Alençon by la Noue that the confederates of the Low Countries still regarded him as their eventual chief and leader. That the comte de Nassau, far from having been duped by the sophistry of queen Catherine at Blamont, had on his side sought only to delude the queen, so that a rupture between France and Spain might ensue; when after the despatch of troops into Flanders, the confederates would at once proclaim as their leader, not a prince stained with the blood of their co-religionists, but M. d'Alençon, the friend of Coligny and of toleration.[2] The junior princes of Montmorency, aware that the queen sought their ruin in order that no factious intrigues might defeat the league she was

[1] Mém. de Henri duc de Bouillon, année 1573.

[2] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii. p. 87.

resolved to effect with the princes of Lorraine—who were equally compromised with her son Henry in the massacre of Paris—united heartily in exhorting Monsieur [1] to close with the propositions made to him; or to demand his nomination as lieutenant-general of the realm. Letters, stated to have been intercepted between queen Catherine and the king of Spain, in which the expediency of seizing the person of the duc d'Alençon was discussed, were shown to Monsieur.[2] The king of Navarre was also brought to use his influence over the vacillating mind of the duke; and in conjunction with the brother of maréchal de Montmorency the sieur de Thoré, the vicomte de Turenne, and la Mole, he contrived to inspire the mind of Monsieur with something resembling the steady resolution requisite in him who would become the leader of a faction. By the private advice of la Mole the duc d'Alençon was previously induced to consult the maréchal de Montmorency on the propositions made to him by the confederates of Flanders and by La Noue —a counsel at once wise and judicious. The marshal, loyal to king Charles and temperate in his political creed, had the true welfare of the realm at heart. He had no enmities to assuage nor ambition to gratify. His aim was to restore to the king his sovereign the power usurped by Catherine; to conciliate faction; to re-establish the parliaments and courts of the kingdom in the privileges either lost or impaired by the long civil contests; and to put down the excessive power of the house of Guise. To accomplish these objects, Catherine believed, and with truth, that Montmorency had connived at the proposed substitution of the duc d'Alençon in the place of the king of Poland, should

[1] The duc d'Alençon after the departure of the king of Poland took the title of "Monsieur."

[2] Ibid.

the decease of the king open to either the succession of the realm. It was believed by the marshal that Henry's reign could neither be pacific nor beneficial; so intense were the political hatreds which his past career had engendered—enmities, the causes of which could neither be forgotten nor pardoned. Montmorency, therefore, exhorted the duc d'Alençon to enter into no direct conspiracies against Charles IX., but firmly to demand his nomination as lieutenant-general. He counselled Monsieur to take every mode of proclaiming his tolerant principles; and to use the vast power conferred by the office which he had demanded, in protecting the Huguenot party; that thus placing himself at the head of a great faction, without offending his brother and king by accepting the name of its chief, he might be enabled to oppose the overwhelming influence of the princes of Lorraine in league with the queen-mother.[1] Montmorency concluded by offering himself to ask from Charles the *bâton* of lieutenant-general for the duke; a proposal gratefully accepted by Monsieur.

Catherine, however, who cared only for the interests of her son Henry, resolutely opposed the project. The health of the king was daily becoming more precarious; what then if the duc d'Alençon, in league with the Montmorencies and the Protestants of France and Flanders, should, at the head of the armies of the realm, rise and refuse the king of Poland entrance into the kingdom? The queen, therefore, moved heaven and earth to defeat the project. With a wary ability which long initiation in the complex diplomacy of the age could alone have conferred, Catherine waited her opportunity to throw the net which should enclose

[1] Le Laboureur: Additions aux Mémoires de Castelnau, tome ii. p. 851. De Thou, liv. lvii. Procès criminel contre la Mole et Coconnas, etc., Avril, 1574. Interrogatoire de la Mole. Mém. de Charles IX.

her opponents and cast them prostrate at her feet. Meantime she represented to the king the inexpediency of transferring such authority to the hand of a prince whom, though her own son, she scrupled not to brand as weak, ambitious, and thoughtless, and in league with the Huguenots, who bore his majesty inveterate hatred for *la St. Barthélemy;* and whose dearest revenge would be his dethronement and the elevation of a puppet king of their own selection. "Suppress this onerous charge, monseigneur, or bestow it on one who, unlike Monsieur your brother, is above suspicion of fostering the factions and tumults of your realm!" The king thereupon peremptorily asked "whom Catherine would advise him to nominate?" The queen replied by counselling his majesty to bestow the dignity of lieutenant-general of the armies of France on his brother-in-law the duke of Lorraine.[1] Charles made some caustic retort; adding that the maréchal de Montmorency had wisely counselled him not to supplant his brother and so create one enemy the more.[2]

An incident, however, soon occurred, which the queen seized with avidity, to the confusion of those who had presumed to interfere in her present schemes for the government of the realm; and her visions respecting her presumed regency on the decease of king Charles.

Some few weeks after the election of Henry to the Polish crown, a gentleman named Vantabren, distinguished alone for the exploit about to be recounted, quitted the service of the maréchal de Montmorency

[1] Charles duc de Lorraine, husband of the princesse Claude de France.

[2] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii. p. 39. "Il y avoit un remède pour arrêter tout ce mal," says de Thou, "c'étoit de donner au duc d'Alençon le lieutenance-générale comme l'avoit eu le roi de Pologne, et alors il ne se serait mis à la tête ni des Politiques, ni des Protestants."

for that of the duc de Guise. For some cause which has never been ascertained this Vantabren was ignominiously dismissed by Guise, the duke interdicting him from appearing again in his presence. Vantabren, who perceived that his fortune was ruined by this dismissal, tried by every means to mollify the duke's resentment. During a sojourn of a day which the court made at Chantilly *en route* for St. Germain, he presented himself, and humbly besought the maréchal de Montmorency to procure him an interview with Guise. The duke refused to listen to any expostulation from his late retainer; and swore that he would slay him if Vantabren again intruded into his presence. It so happened that the duc de Guise a few evenings subsequently was descending the great staircase of the palace of St. Germain, when Vantabren again suddenly threw himself on his knees before the duke, praying for forgiveness. Guise no sooner perceived who the suppliant was than he drew his sword and made a thrust at Vantabren. The latter, though severely wounded, immediately ran past the duke towards the apartments of the maréchal de Montmorency. The doors, however, were closed. The wounded man, therefore, still pursued by the duc de Guise with drawn sword, made for the apartments of the dowager-duchesse de Montmorency.[1] On the stairs he met M. de Thoré,[2] who was proceeding thither, attended by a torch-bearer, to sup with his mother. The duke exclaimed that Vantabren had meditated an assault on his life, and desired de Thoré to stand aside while he gave the miscreant his *coup-de-grâce*. Thoré, however, took the wounded man under his protection, and reminded the duke that this assault in the royal palace perilled his own life. Guise thereupon retraced his steps, and entering the

[1] Madelaine de Savoye, widow of the constable Anne de Montmorency.
[2] Guillaume de Montmorency, third son of the constable.

royal bed-chamber, he roused the king, and besought his majesty to pardon his enterprise, as Vantabren had insolently intimated to him that his wife the duchesse de Guise and the maréchal de Montmorency had conspired to assassinate him; and that he had, therefore, good cause to punish the traitor with death, if after repeated dismissals he still intruded into his presence.[1] While the duke was speaking, the maréchal de Montmorency entered the apartment. After indignantly denying the accusation preferred by Vantabren, he demanded that the latter should be arrested and examined. Charles, ill and irritable, deeming the affair of little consequence, commanded that it should be referred to the queen his mother, who would see justice done. The queen, therefore, caused the arrest of Vantabren; and within the space of an hour she despatched three privy councillors to examine and take his depositions. The wounded man reiterated the accusation against Montmorency, stating that the marshal had hired him to slay the duc de Guise, though, upon being pressed with questions, he retracted the charge. This first admission, however, sufficed for the queen, and gave her a plea for innumerable machinations, such as she delighted in. Indeed it appears probable that the adventure had been altogether concocted by Catherine, to furnish her with an ostensible cause for the adoption of the extraordinary measures she had devised to secure the accession of the king of Poland, and her own regency during his absence.

In the morning the king rose much exasperated at the outrage perpetrated in his palace, and even threatened the duc de Guise with arrest. Catherine

[1] Mém. de Bouillon. Mém. de l'Etat de la France sous Charles IX. De Thou, liv. lvii.: "Scevole de Vantabren," says the latter, "s'étoit insinué dans la maison du duc de Guise, par des moyens qui lui faisoient peu d'honneur."

then laid before his majesty the depositions made by Vantabren; nor did she hesitate to associate her son d'Alençon in the crime charged to Montmorency. With consummate skill she reverted to the proposed elevation of the duke to supreme command over the military resources of the realm. She stated that it was clearly proved that the duc d'Alençon, in league with Montmorency, had combined to assassinate the duc de Guise; and for that purpose they had engaged Vantabren, an ancient retainer of the Montmorencies. "Sire! it behoves you at this crisis to beware of the designs of your brother and the Montmorencies, who solicit with such vehemence that you should bestow upon him the command of your armies. When they have thus become master of your troops, and shall have destroyed the princes of Guise, what obstacle will there remain to the completion of their most treasonable designs?"[1] These considerations seemed greatly to impress the mind of the king; and after some meditation, he directed that Vantabren should undergo the torture, to extract further details concerning the alleged plot. The queen, however, at the solicitation of the duc de Guise, had already released Vantabren, whom she prohibited from approaching the vicinity of any residence where his majesty might be sojourning. Catherine's machinations having established a feeling of umbrage and resentment between the chieftains of Montmorency and Guise—which ended in the departure of Montmorency for Chantilly, whither his nephew Turenne escorted him—the queen pursued her advantage by despatching courier after courier to summon the duc de Lorraine to St. Germain; in order that, whilst the king's mind was still agitated by suspicion of his brother's disloyalty, he might confirm her selection of a generalissimo for the armies of France.

[1] Mezeray. De Thou. Bouillon. Mém. de l'Etat de la France.

The duke hastened to obey the summons of his mother-in-law, to whom he was devoted. Accompanied by the duchess Claude his wife and the cardinal de Lorraine, he arrived about the middle of the month of February at St. Germain, when he took the oaths in the presence of the king and council, and was provisionally invested with the *bâton* of lieutenant-general.

Catherine, having thus accomplished her design, next wrote to Fénelon, ambassador at the court of England. To establish Monsieur in England was, in the queen's opinion, a better expedient than that which she had determined as à *dernier ressort*, namely, to arrest and keep him in safe durance until after the return of the king of Poland. But Catherine judged that the rumour of the intrigues of the court of St. Germain, and the pretext which she had thereupon taken to deprive Monsieur of the highest command in the realm, was likely to degrade him in the opinion of queen Elizabeth. This consideration induced her to despatch an explanation of what her majesty terms *la folie de Vantabren*. She writes: "M. de la Mothe, as you have heard of this foolish *escapade* of Vantabren, and probably an exaggerated version, I write to explain that this said Vantabren—who by-the-bye is a personage hot-headed and highly disaffected towards my cousin the duc de Guise—sent to ask audience of the said duke. Upon this the duke, at the conclusion of his supper, on the 16th of this month, quitted his apartment in this château, to speak privately with Vantabren, who, as soon as he saw the duke, exclaimed, 'Take heed to yourself, monseigneur! the maréchal de Montmorency has conspired to take your life. Be sure, also, that madame your consort, who loves you no longer, is his accomplice!' Upon this, my said cousin de Guise replied, 'Rascal! you lie! M. de Montmorency is a man too noble and honourable to

devise such villainy!' and, drawing his sword, he gave him a thrust, which he thought had killed the said de Vantabren, but on examination it proved only a slight wound on the arm, which had ripped up his doublet. The said de Vantabren, however, who is now a prisoner, maintains that he never spoke a word to the said duc de Guise; nor uttered the names of M. de Montmorency or of madame de Guise. It is certain that he is a disaffected servant; the friendship between the said de Montmorency and de Guise has not been materially affected by this circumstance, as it is well understood that this de Vantabren is a madman, who is now in the hands of my provost of the archers, who will inflict a summary chastisement."[1]

It is impossible not to marvel at the extraordinary dexterity manifested on every occasion by Catherine de Medici in falsifying any incident so as to convert the statement to her own advantage. "Certes," says an old writer, "her majesty's adulterations of truth were of the most amazing extent and description."

In the apartments of the duc d'Alençon, meanwhile, all the disaffected of the court assembled: the king of Navarre, Turenne, La Mole, Thoré, Coconnas, and Condé. As for the latter, his taciturnity and over-strained zeal in the discharge of his religious devotions inspired Catherine with distrust. The prince never performed the commonest action without previously making the sign of the cross. Upon the queen rebuking this levity, the prince one day sarcastically retorted, "Ah, madame, the princess my wife initiates me well in the use of that sign!"[2] Every other day brought couriers from Cracow bearing letters from Henry, addressed to his mother and to the princesse

[1] Lettre de la Reyne-mère à M. de la Mothe-Fénelon, Ambassadeur en Angleterre: MSS. de St. Germain, Bibl. Imp.

[2] Etoile: Mém. pour l'Histoire de France, p. 62.

de Condé. These epistles were of the most impassioned description, filled with protestations of inviolable fidelity; and some of them were actually signed by Henry with his own blood. The tears shed by his consort for the absence of Henry naturally exasperated Condé; and scenes of violence frequently occurred between the august couple, Marie invariably taking refuge in the apartments of queen Catherine, who, according to her promise to her son, protected the princess. Condé, though he said little on political subjects, observed much. To the taunting address[1] of the king he replied respectfully; while secretly preparing to flee from the disgrace and constraint of his position at court. Accordingly, one morning the prince departed from St. Germain, confiding his project to no one; and so well concerted was his flight, that he reached Amiens in safety, from whence he proceeded to St. Jean d'Angely before Catherine ascertained the route he had taken. There Condé made instant abjuration of the Romish creed, protesting that he had been compelled to accept its semblance by threats of death or torment.

The ladies of the court ably served the queen's designs at this juncture. As Catherine had formerly ensnared Antoine king of Navarre and Louis prince of Condé by the charms of the fair but facile damsels in her train, so now she either successfully neutralized many of the designs of the princes; or diverted them from the steady pursuit of any hostile measure.

The king of Navarre and the duc d'Alençon contended for the favour of the beautiful madame de Sauve,[2] whom Catherine instructed in the artful course which

[1] Le roy disoit que "par la mort Dieu la messe ne le sauvera pas plus que les autres," se doutant bien que la contrainte en matières de conscience peut bien faire des hypocrites et non pas des Catholiques.

[2] Charlotte de la Baune, wife of the secretary of state Simon de Fizes, baron de Sauve.

she pursued between the princes. The queen of Navarre condescended to accept the homage of the accomplished la Mole, *le Baladin de la Cour* as this young lord was satirically nick-named. Marguerite's friend and confidente the duchesse de Nevers, Henriette de Clèves,[1] smiled upon the comte de Coconnas, a Piedmontese nobleman and captain of the guard to the duc d'Alençon. The young vicomte de Turenne for a time abandoned himself to the charms of mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, the *ci-devant* mistress of the king of Poland. Profligate intrigues, revels, gaming, treasonable plots, and dissimulation were the hideous features of the court of France in the Lenten season of 1574.

The Huguenot army during this interval had been re-organized. The genius of Coligny seemed to animate la Noue and Montgomery. Simultaneously during the month of February, 1574, every province in the kingdom became convulsed, a prey to the horrors and rapine of a fourth civil contest.

Whilst the king of Poland, on the eve of Shrove Tuesday, was dancing at the nuptial feast of the daughter of the palatine of Cracow half of France had risen to arms with the avowed object of freeing Monsieur and the princes from their alleged bondage at St. Germain; and of providing for his own exclusion from the succession. During the night of Shrove Tuesday, February 22nd, la Noue captured Lusignan; Besay, at the head of 1200 brave Béarnois troops seized Fontenay. In Saintonge the towns of Royan and Talmont opened their gates and submitted to the Huguenots. In Normandy Coulombiers fell; while Carenton and Valognes capitulated at the summons of Montgomery.[2] It had further been resolved to despatch a body of cavalry 200 strong under the sieur de Chau-

[1] Sister of the princesse de Condé and the duchesse de Guise.

[2] Mezeray—Abrégé Chron. Vie de Charles IX.

mont Guitry to the vicinity of St. Germain; when it was expected that the duc d'Alençon, according to his promises and previous pledges, would declare for the league and boldly effect his own liberation and that of the king of Navarre by flying from the court. Owing to some misapprehension of la Noue's directions, Guitry appeared in the neighbourhood of St. Germain ten days earlier than his arrival was expected by the princes. Besides, the detachment under his command was inefficient; the number of troops being too few not to render evasion somewhat perilous to the duke and his partisans; while their muster was considerable enough to betray the treasonable service on which they were bound. The consternation of the duc d'Alençon, when this premature advance of Guitry was announced, paralyzed the little wit with which nature had endowed him. He wept, raved, and protested that nothing should induce him to sanction or partake in so preposterous an enterprise; while he angrily repulsed the entreaties of the king of Navarre, Turenne, and others, who implored him to make the venture.

The intelligence of the advance of the Huguenots upon St. Germain reached the palace late on the evening of Shrove Tuesday. Guitry's detachment was magnified into an army, and the wildest terror took possession of the courtiers. It was rumoured that a descent of Huguenots from Normandy and the districts of Beausse and Vexin had occurred; and that the design of the insurgents was to murder the king and his mother, and to slaughter all the courtiers about the person of his majesty. The palace guards were doubled; and patrols of Swiss kept the road open to Paris. All the lords and ladies of the court prepared to fly to the capital, and the ministers even abandoned their royal master. Catherine, who, like the rest, at first believed that the conspiracy was aimed at her son's life, alone

preserved composure. "The queen," says d'Aubigné,[1] "caused a search to be instituted in all the royal apartments. She vehemently entreated the king to quit St. Germain while there was yet time, reminding him that it had been predicted by her astrologers that St. Germain was destined to exercise an evil influence over his majesty's fate. The courtiers meantime were making their escape—some by the high road, others by St. Cloud; others, again, in boats. It was a race which should reach Paris first. Half-way between St. Germain and Paris the cardinals de Bourbon, de Lorraine, and de Guise, the chancellor Birague, and Morvilliers, were met mounted on spirited chargers, grasping the pommels of their saddles to keep themselves steady; and feeling as much affrighted at their horses as they did at the enemy. They were followed only by two retainers of all their sumptuous trains." The king was deeply affected while witnessing this panic and tumult. In reply to his mother's exhortations, Charles refused to fly before his foes. "Oh, could they not have waited for my death!"[2] was the agonized exclamation of the unhappy king—whose weakness was now so great that he rose from his bed only during a portion of the day—when first informed of the descent of Guitry.

Catherine, whose vigilance and penetration were seldom at fault, caused rigorous watch to be kept on the movements of Monsieur. M. de Thoré, the king of Navarre, and Turenne occupied the lodgings of the late constable de Montmorency in the village of St. Germain; but the queen sent to ascertain their movements, and probably would have arrested them had they attempted flight. La Mole, meanwhile, during the scene

[1] Aubigné: Hist. Universelle, tome ii. liv. ii. p. 119. Mém. du duc de Bouillon.

[2] Ibid. Mém. de l'Etat de la France sous Charles IX.

in the duke's chamber, held aloof, and manifested many signs of disapprobation, deeming the risk of evasion great, and capture certain before the princes reached the stronghold of Sedan.[1] Several hours passed in this indecision, when the duke, terrified at the panic which raged around him, took his favourite apart, and demanded his counsel. La Mole advised the duke to reveal everything without delay to his mother, as escape was hopeless, so that by his candour he might merit the pardon of the king.[2] Monsieur agreed; and deputed la Mole to proceed without delay to seek audience of Catherine for this purpose—the duke carefully hiding his intended treachery from Turenne, the king of Navarre, and the sieur de Thoré, "as," says Monsieur, "they would have frustrated my design."[3] La Mole accordingly obtained admission to the queen's presence, and, after making a great parade of his loyal devotion to the interests of her majesty, confessed the project of the intended evasion of the princes, and the true reason of Guitry's advance. Catherine listened indignantly to the confession of Monsieur's gentleman; she then despatched the officer on guard to command the presence of the king of Navarre and the duc d'Alençon. The king of Navarre, in reply to the interrogatories of Catherine, said little, and compromised no one. But the duc d'Alençon, abject and voluble in his terror, instead of confining himself to the simple statement made by la Mole of his intended flight, detailed the ultimate project of the confederates, and,

[1] Sedan appertained to the duc de Bouillon, whose consort Françoise, daughter of the duc de Montpensier, was a convert to the reformed doctrines. Bouillon was to meet the princes at Rheims with a body of cavalry, and escort them to Sedan.

[2] The words of la Mole were: "Je vous prie allez vers la reyne et luy dites ce qu'en savez: je m'asseure qu'elle s'en trouvera satisfaite!" —Interrogatoire de Monseigneur le duc d'Alençon.

[3] Ibid. Procès criminel.

moreover, basely divulged their names. "I was in the village of St. Germain with my uncle de Thoré," recounts Turenne, "when we determined to proceed once more to the castle to see whether we could at last induce Monsieur to join us in a flight. I proceeded to the apartment of Monsieur, and from thence to the presence-chamber of the queen, where I found him and the king of Navarre. The latter approached me and whispered, '*Notre homme dit tout!*' I then spoke to my uncle de Thoré, and begged him to retire, so that he might avenge any ill-treatment I might receive. He followed my counsel, in doing which he fared well; for, if he had remained longer, his death would have been certain, for Monsieur had deeply implicated him in the confession he had made by the treacherous counsel of la Mole, who wished to avenge himself for not having been altogether taken into our counsels." Turenne proceeds to relate that he remained in the presence-chamber watching the turn events would take when he saw the queen quit her closet and proceed to the chamber of the king. M. d'Alençon and the king of Navarre attended her majesty. Turenne courageously followed to the ante-chamber of the king's apartments, and there found Monsieur talking merrily to madame de Sauve as if nothing had happened, waiting his turn to enter the royal cabinet after the king of Navarre had been dismissed from the presence. As soon as Monsieur perceived Turenne he came up to him, and hurriedly whispered, "I have testified nothing in particular against you, excepting that you made me a general promise to obey my commands. Let your uncle Thoré, however, escape if he can!"[1] The duc d'Alençon was then summoned to the royal presence. The queen, who now thoroughly held Monsieur and the king of Navarre in her power,

[1] Mém. de Bouillon, liv. i.

then briefly reprimanded them both; her majesty adding, with much apparent good humour, that, in consideration of Monsieur's frank confession, their fault should be overlooked, provided that for the future they carefully abstained from conspiracies. The king confirmed the words of his mother, but exacted that each of the princes should send a gentleman to Guitry to disavow his project, and to forbid his advance. Turenne, luckily for himself, happened to be still in the ante-chamber of the king's apartment; and as it was deemed expedient to lose no time—the strength of Guitry's detachment not having been ascertained—the viscount was deputed on behalf of M. d'Alençon. The sieur de Torcy[1] was the envoy sent by Charles to command the insurgents to lay down arms and disperse. The princes, meanwhile, were dismissed from the presence, and sent guarded to their apartments to prepare for their immediate journey to Paris with queen Catherine. At midnight the cortège set out from St. Germain, escorted by a strong detachment of Swiss. In her majesty's coach were the king of Navarre, the duc d'Alençon, the captain of the guards, and to keep all joyous, madame de Sauve. Catherine proceeded to the Fauxbourg St. Honoré, and took up her residence in the hôtel of the maréchal de Retz, where she was received by madame de Retz,[2] whose wonder was excessive at the sudden arrival of such illustrious guests.

The ill-concerted expedition of Guitry has been explained in various ways—some authors declaring that, from selfish motives alone, and to escape arrest, he anticipated the orders of la Noue, and hastily raising a troop appeared in the vicinity of Mantes. The perusal of documentary evidence confirms their statement, and

[1] Jean de Blosset, seigneur de Torcy.

[2] Claude Catherine de Clermont, daughter of the baron de Dampierre. Her first husband was the maréchal d'Annebaut.

shows that the failure of the project may in great measure be attributed to the pusillanimity of the duc d'Alençon, and the resentment of M. de la Mole, who put into his master's head that the confederates, instead of receiving law from himself as their chief, were presumptuously attempting to dictate. This insinuation, and the peril likely to attend his evasion from St. Germain, added to the vacillation of the duke upon the expediency of opposing the will of his royal mother, caused Monsieur to resort to the cowardly expedient of confession to save himself from the penalties of an intrigue, the secret of which he knew must ere long be in Catherine's power. As for the queen, she purposely gave all the *éclat* possible to a plot, the political consequences of which had been obviated by the penitent avowals of Monsieur. Her flight from St. Germain at midnight was intended to give the utmost publicity to the affair; and to enlist the sympathies of the Parisians in the outrage perpetrated against the person of the dying king. Her journey in the middle of the night was meant to exasperate the minds of Charles's subjects against the rebels, and prepare them for the severe measures her majesty meditated the better to secure the kingdom for her son Henry. Guitry and his Huguenots were more than thirty miles from St. Germain on the eve of Ash Wednesday. In the castle —besides the usual royal garrison of 1500 Swiss and French troops stationed in the adjacent village—were detachments of the king's Scotch guard, his majesty's Swiss body-guard, Catherine's body-guard, the armed train in the suite of the duke and duchess of Lorraine, and a powerful body of retainers belonging to the respective retinues of the cardinals de Guise and de Lorraine, the duc d'Aumale, and the chancelier de Birague. Catherine's hurried departure from St. Germain during the night of the 23rd of February could not, therefore,

have been inspired by apprehension of personal violence or capture from Guitry and his troops; nor in a palace so guarded could she have feared the escape of the princes when committed by the king to *surveillance*.

On the following morning the king and his young consort Elizabeth of Austria arrived in the capital from St. Germain, escorted by the 1500 troops in garrison. As Charles passed through the ball-room of the castle of St. Germain on his way to his litter, a *fleur-de-lis* from the escutcheon of the arms of France which decorated a corbel of the ceiling of the apartment fell to the ground, and was broken at the king's feet—an omen which was deemed of sinister import.[1] Charles took up his residence for a few days with his mother at the hôtel de Retz, and then removed with Catherine and the court to the castle of Vincennes.

The duc d'Alençon and the king of Navarre, meanwhile, were subjected to rigorous watch; their guards, however, had been dismissed, and some degree of liberty restored to them. The enterprise of St. Germain having been defeated by the confessions of Monsieur, the king insisted that his brother and the king of Navarre were entitled to the indulgence which such an act of reparation merited. Catherine acquiesced, because she relied for more overt acts on the part of the princes; and on the weakness of her son's disposition—for she knew that his avowals sprung alone from his fear. She perceived that the spirit which prompted the enterprise of St. Germain was still alive in the bosom of the rest of the conspirators, who were now incited to act with greater indiscretion, by the news of la Noue's successes in the provinces. The princes were interdicted from quitting the domain of Vincennes without an order signed by the king. A nightly search was instituted in their apartments; their

[1] Vie de Charles IX. : Sorbin de Ste. Foy.

coffers and closets were opened, and their beds examined, while an officer nominated by Catherine slept in the same apartment.[1] The vicomte de Turenne, nevertheless, on his return from his mission to Guitry, was permitted to confer privately with the princes. He represented to them the fault they had committed in not immediately joining Guitry's detachment, which proved to be larger, and the plan of their evasion better organized than had been believed. The anxiety of Monsieur to escape from the court was now greater than ever; and as Catherine had foreseen, many were the private conferences in which he imprudently participated with Turenne and others to reorganize a project of flight.

Charles meantime rallied, and for the space of a fortnight the power of Catherine again suffered eclipse. His majesty stated that he was resolved to learn the true reasons which had again induced his subjects to take arms against him; and for that purpose he despatched Turenne, with a safe conduct, to Guitry, requiring his presence at Vincennes. Guitry had the courage to present himself, and was heard by Charles in person in the presence of the queen-mother. During these conferences news unfortunately arrived of the capture of many important towns and fortresses in the provinces, by la Noue and Montgomery. The king, therefore, honourably dismissed Guitry; and resolving if possible to negotiate a peace, he accredited the vicomte de Turenne to Montgomery, desiring to be informed by the general of the league of the reason of the insurrection, and of the fresh causes of complaint preferred by his Huguenot subjects. Charles, however, while pacifically inclined, resolved not to omit

[1] Seconde Déposition du Roy de Navarre, en la Présence de la Reyne-mère, du Cardinal de Bourbon, des Présidents de Thou, Hennequin, et autres, 18 Avril, 1574: Procès Criminel de la Mole et Coconnas.

measures likely to preserve the realm from the continuance of a fourth civil contest. He commanded, therefore, the advance of three powerful divisions of troops; the first under the maréchal de Matignon was despatched to oppose the progress of Montgomery in Normandy; the duc de Montpensier was sent at the head of a strong force into Guienne; while Jacques de Crussol and the prince-dauphin of Auvergne[1] took the command of the army destined to act against the Huguenots of Languedoc and Dauphiny. The duc d'Alençon and the king of Navarre were, moreover, directed to publish declarations of their innocence in the attempted enterprise of St. Germain; documents in which they protested their fidelity to the person of the sovereign, and their discountenance of any armed demonstration whatever against his government. Catherine caused these declarations to be printed and extensively dispersed throughout every province and town of the realm. The queen, through her emissaries, nevertheless, had ascertained that Turenne carried to Montgomery's camp the solemn pledge of the princes to withdraw on the first opportunity from court; the duc d'Alençon proposing to retire to the Low Countries, and the king of Navarre to his own principality of Béarn.

The duc d'Alençon, during his sojourn at Vincennes, profitably employed his leisure in concluding a strict fraternal alliance with his sister Marguerite. At St. Germain the confidential relations between the brother and sister had occasioned dissatisfaction to queen Catherine. Monsieur represented to his sister that the accession of the king of Poland, *her enemy*, to the throne of France, would be one of the most fatal events which could happen to her. That under Henry's reign she would

[1] Son and heir of the duc de Montpensier.

be stripped of influence and consideration—the former being monopolized by the queen-mother—and reduced to enact the subordinate part of a princess of Béarn. Monsieur then sketched the political rôle which Marguerite might fill as the consort of the leader of the French Huguenots, and as the cherished sister of the chief of the Flemish lords of the Confederation. Moreover, the duke hinted his belief that the princes of Guise bore the king of Poland no extraordinary devotion, although in their zeal for the faith they combined with the queen-mother in promoting his interest; a fact which, with more foresight than Monsieur could generally boast of, he predicted would so complicate the political relations of the future reign as to afford the widest scope for the efforts of faction. "Perceiving that my brother's mind was bent upon rendering himself agreeable to me, and that he made me so many protestations of submission and attachment, I resolved to give him also love and attachment, and to espouse all that concerned him, with the condition only that in nothing would I go against my dear and good brother king Charles, whom I loved faithfully," writes the queen of Navarre. In another paragraph Marguerite reverts again to her love for her brother Charles, "who is the support and guide of my daily life. He was," continues Marguerite, "a brother from whom I received nothing but good; a brother who, amid all the persecutions which my brother d'Anjou inflicted on me at Angers, advised, assisted, and counselled me. In short, at his death I lost at once all that I ever could lose."[1]

The vicomte de Turenne, during these transactions, returned to Paris, having totally failed in even procuring a hearing from Montgomery, who proceeded to invest the town of St. Lo. The marquis de St.

[1] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite de Valois, liv. i.

Sulpice, the envoy whom Catherine commissioned to proceed to La Rochelle to secure by promises of oblivion of the past and future royal favours the neutrality of its inhabitants and the closing of the port to foreign ships of war, accomplished nothing by his mission; and was even glad to find himself safely out of the town.[1] In Languedoc, meantime, the maréchal duc de Damville, brother of Montmorency, far from yielding obedience to the mandate of the king to resign his *bâton* of command to the duc d'Usez, took military possession of the province—aided by the secret connivance of the Huguenots—and held himself on the defensive. These reverses greatly embittered the mind of the king. Catherine perpetually insisted on the necessity of vigorous action; while she skilfully filled the mind of Charles with sombre doubts of all who could eventually endanger her projects. Whilst affairs remained thus balanced, the king was admonished through one Yves Brinon, who carried on the trade of a public spy and informer, that another conspiracy was organized for the flight of the princes. M. d'Alençon having been permitted to visit Paris, had conferred, it was ascertained, alone with Turenne; and between them it was agreed that, under pretext of a hunting expedition, the flight of the duke, the king of Navarre, and their partisans to join Condé and la Noue, should be attempted again on the approaching Wednesday in Easter week.

This abuse of his clemency, added to the rejection of his pacific overtures by Montgomery, exasperated Charles; and in vehement indignation he gave his assent to any measures which his mother deemed requisite to sift "the conspiracy," as his majesty termed the relation of his brother with the Huguenots and the faction of Les Politiques, of which Damville and Thoré, brothers

[1] Mezeray. Vie de François Seigneur de la Noue, par Moyse Amyraut, p. 105, et seq.

of the maréchal de Montmorency, were the leaders. Montmorency himself, however, the queen determined also to lure into her power; "for," says de Thou,[1] "her majesty greatly dreaded lest Montmorency also and Cossé should, during the absence of the king of Poland, take measures to exclude him from the throne. She therefore set to work to invent or to recount to her son facts sometimes exaggerated, sometimes falsified, his majesty being even more prone than usual to believe these calumnies from the irritability occasioned by his malady." An order was therefore despatched to Montmorency, and another to the maréchal de Cossé, requiring their presence at Vincennes. Montmorency obeyed, re-assured by the kindness of the queen's invitation and the friendliness evinced by the duc de Guise, whom the marshal had recently visited, with the duke and duchess of Lorraine, at Nanteuil. Cossé,[2] in his turn following the example of Montmorency, obeyed the royal summons. Catherine and the king gave these noblemen courteous greeting, and most hospitable entertainment, while they matured their plan. Madame de Montmorency,[3] in her anxiety respecting her husband, who was known to be compromised in Monsieur's confession made at St. Germain, journeyed to Vincennes from Chantilly; but she likewise was reassured by Catherine's amenity of manner and her majesty's praise of the marshal, whom the queen termed "*un homme de paix.*" The *maréchale,* whose health was delicate, therefore took leave of the queen, satisfied on the whole that her husband was safe. She nevertheless received

[1] Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii.

[2] Artus de Cossé, chevalier de l'Ordre du Roi, gouverneur de Touraine et d'Orléans.

[3] Diane de France, legitimated daughter of Henry II., king of France, and of Philippa Duca. Diane married first Horatio Farnese, Duca de Castro. Her second husband was the eldest son of the constable Anne de Montmorency.

information from some of the ladies of the court, while taking leave prior to her return to Chantilly, which occasioned her uneasiness. Madame de Montmorency immediately communicated these rumours to her husband; while she sent an urgent message imploring the marshal to return with her to Chantilly. The marshal, however, whose conscience acquitted him of any crime, persisted in staying to confront his enemies, and to give proof that he feared them not. On the evening of his consort's departure Montmorency attended the *coucher* of king Charles. After drawing the curtain of the king's bed, the marshal wished his majesty good-night and prepared to retire. The king looked at him long and earnestly, and then slowly repeated three times, "Adieu, M. de Montmorency!" and sank back on his pillow. About midnight the queen and Birague entered the apartment of Charles, and obtained his signature to a *lettre de cachet* to arrest the marshals. By the queen's command two of the royal coaches were sent for, from St. Maur des Fossez, and ordered to be prepared for use at dawn. Catherine, on quitting the king's chamber, summoned d'Auchy captain of the guards, and commanded him to arrest Montmorency and Cossé. At four o'clock, therefore, on the following morning, the marshals were arrested, and conveyed each under a strong guard to the Bastille.[1]

Warrants of arrest were the same day, Friday, April 10th, issued against la Mole, Coconnas, Laurent de St. Martin, Pierre de Grandri, and two brothers of the name of Tourtray, all appertaining to the household of the king or Monsieur. These persons were seized and conveyed to the Conciergerie, for having driven two

[1] De Thou, liv. lvii. Discours sur l'Emprisonment du Maréchal de Montmorency: Archives Curieuses, tome viii. 1ère séries. Mezeray: Mém. sur l'Etat de France. Le Laboureur: Additions aux Mémoires de Castelnau.

princes of the blood to revolt by pernicious counsels, and having connived in their rebellion. The arrest of Turenne, Thoré, Beauvais, and Grand-Champ was decreed; but fortunately for these noblemen, they received timely warning of their peril, and fled with the utmost precipitation from Paris. On the return of d'Auchy captain of the guards, from Paris, after consigning Cossé and Montmorency to the care of his majesty's governor of the Bastille, the duc d'Alençon and the king of Navarre were summoned to speak to the king, and were both arrested, in the ante-chamber of Charles's apartment.[1] The princes were deprived of their swords, and conducted, under the escort of a guard of soldiers, to separate chambers in the keep of the castle of Vincennes. Access to their apartment was forbidden; and for the first few days their imprisonment was rigorous. Catherine having thus dexterously seized and imprisoned all the principal opponents of the king of Poland, next sent for Christopher de Thou, first president of the parliament of Paris, and for Pierre Hennequin, one of the colleagues of the former, and nominated them to preside at the commission issued under the great seal to try the prisoners. The following day, Sunday, April 11th, la Mole was subjected to an interrogatory at the Conciergerie; while Coconnas was conducted into the presence of the king.

On Monday, April 12th, Charles personally questioned him on the details of the conspiracy. The next day the duc d'Alençon was examined by the two presidents in the presence of the queen-mother. Monsieur appeared before the commissioners pale and paralyzed with terror. He avowed all, and criminated everybody, especially Turenne and la Mole. He confessed that the king of Navarre and himself were to have quitted the court on the 10th of April, the day he was

[1] De Thou, liv. lvii. See last note.

arrested, their destination being Condé's castle of Muret. He acknowledged that the king of Navarre had promised to promote the insurrection[1] with all the resources of his principality. Finally, he threw the blame of this, his last meditated evasion, on la Mole. Monsieur having made his deposition, was suffered to withdraw.[2] The king of Navarre was next interrogated. Henry replied boldly and frankly, criminating no one, and throwing the blame of the recent conspiracy on Catherine. He refused to submit to an interrogatory, but addressed himself directly to the queen. This harangue, in which the king reproached Catherine with insincerity and perfidy in her relations towards himself, was composed by Marguerite de Valois, who in this hour of peril served her husband faithfully, and with an ability which greatly contributed to Henry's vindication. "The king my husband," says the queen of Navarre, "not having any to counsel him, requested me to draw up a summary of what he should say when before the commissioners, that so he might vindicate himself and hurt no one. God gave me the grace to compose this document so to the purpose, that my husband was satisfied, and the said commissioners astonished to find the king so well prepared." The confession of the duc d'Alençon sealed the fate of la Mole, Coconnas, and the other accused; while the deposition of the king of Navarre was, to his honour, suppressed by command of Catherine, as irrelevant to the proceedings.

[1] "Ils se devoient trouver à Montfort l'Amaury, et luy dit le roy de Navarre qu'il feroit ce qu'il voudrait, mais qu'il n'en faloit rien dire, adjoustant ces mots: 'Le prince de Condé fera ce que je voudray!'"—Déposition de M. d'Alençon.

[2] Procès Criminel de la Mole et de Coconnas. Catherine during the process was apprehensive beyond measure lest her life should be attempted. One night the queen imagined that a quantity of gunpowder had been deposited beneath her bed to blow her up during the night. A strict search was instituted, but nothing could be discovered.

The name of la Mole is never once mentioned by Henry, although the intimacy of the former with queen Marguerite might justly be supposed to be irritating to the king her husband. Rumours were circulated over Paris calculated to inflame the resentment of the populace against the prisoners. It was alleged that the torments of the "question" had extracted from the prisoners the true design of their confederates the Huguenots, which was to have fired Paris during the celebration of high mass on Easter Sunday. A little waxen image found amongst the effects of la Mole having a needle transfixed through the heart was represented as a charm to bewitch the king, and to procure his majesty's death by sorcery.[1] The projected flight of Monsieur and his associates to join count Louis de Nassau, was aggravated by the addition of every perfidious incentive: though, as Catherine's own secret negotiations with Nassau to place her son Henry in the position which was now pronounced treasonable, were known to the presiding judges de Thou and Hennequin, they refused to condemn the prisoners as traitors until the queen procured a declaration from king Charles, expressly stating that he regarded count Louis and his colleagues, the confederates of the Low Countries, as enemies.

On the 30th of April, therefore, eighteen days only after their arrest, la Mole and Coconnas, after enduring the torture ordinary and extraordinary, were condemned to lose their heads—a decree executed on the Place de Grève the day it was pronounced. The brothers François and Pierre Tourtray perished on the

[1] "Interrogué: La Mole a dit que ladite image de cire est pour aimer sa maîtresse qu'il vouloir espouser, qui est de son pays: qu'on voye cette image, et l'on trouvera que c'est la figure d'une femme; que Cosme a cette image laquelle a deux coups dans le cœur, et telle la baillera."—Déposition de la Mole: Procès verbal de la Question, 30 Avril, 1574.

wheel. Cosmo Ruggieri the astrologer, being accused by la Mole of having manufactured the waxen image said to have bewitched the king, was arrested and sent to the galleys for life; a doom from which he was rescued by the queen. The rest of the accused were either detained in the damp vaults of the Conciergerie or consigned to the *oubliettes* of the Bastille.[1]

The executions over for l'Enterprise des Jours Gras, as the conspiracy of the princes, la Mole, and Coconnas was termed, the health of king Charles began rapidly to decline. Ulcers formed on the lungs; and his liver, which was extensively diseased, occasioned him at times excruciating pain. The slightest exertion brought on gasping breath and fainting fits. During the greater part of the month of May Charles, unable to stand upright, was carried from his bed to a couch placed close to an open window, and strewed with green boughs, which reminded the king of the fresh woodlands of the forests he was never again to visit. Nevertheless, Charles tenaciously retained the exercise of royal power, which he declined to delegate to his mother.

The indomitable energy which had been the characteristic of Charles IX. remained with him to the last. About four days previous to his decease Charles was informed that an ambassador from queen Elizabeth had arrived; and it was proposed by one of the ministers that

[1] "Ladite exécution de la Mole étoit la justification de mondit frère d'Alençon," wrote king Charles in a despatch to Fénelon, his ambassador in England, May 20, 1574, when directing him to relate the circumstances of the conspiracy to queen Elizabeth, that she might judge how far her suitor was implicated. The queen-mother afterwards told the cardinal de Bourbon, that on the eve of la Mole's execution she went to visit M. d'Alençon, who was ill in bed of grief and anger. "I dared not approach too nearly to the bed of my son," said Catherine, "for fear, such was his resentment, that he should plunge his dagger into my bosom."—Journal de Nevers.

he should be admitted to audience by the queen. Charles, however, insisted upon being removed to his "verdant couch," and that the ambassador should be introduced. The harangue pronounced by the envoy Leyton, which lasted three quarters of an hour, must have proved a terrible ordeal to the dying king. Nevertheless, Charles courageously listened to its end, and then replied in a few faint but pertinent words.[1] Music also afforded alleviation to the sufferings and weariness of the death-bed of Charles IX. During the silent watches of the night the melody of flutes and viols in an adjacent chamber soothed the irritability of the sufferer; or the voice of Etienne le Roy, the king's favourite chorister, lulled him to slumber.[2] During the last fortnight of his life the king vomited blood in great quantities, which slightly exuded also from his ears. On the morning of the 29th day of May, 1574, it became evident that Charles was sinking fast, and could not survive many hours. He lay in the last stage of exhaustion, his limbs occasionally contracted by apparently painless convulsions.

On this day early Charles reluctantly signed letters patent, setting forth "that his illness prevented him from applying with diligence to affairs of state. He therefore committed all things to the care of the queen his mother, whom he knew to be very competent; and that it was his command that her majesty was obeyed as himself in case it pleased God to call him, until the arrival of his brother the king of Poland."[3] Later in

[1] The last foreign despatch signed by king Charles was addressed to his ambassador Fénelon; it is dated the day of the king's death, May 30, 1574. Charles always spoke hopefully of his recovery.

[2] Sorbin de Ste. Foy: Vie de Charles IX.

[3] Recueil des Choses mémorables arrivées en France sous Charles IX. De Thou. Sorbin de Ste. Foy: Vie de Charles IX.

the day a courier brought the news of the siege of Domfront by Matignon, and of the surrender of Montgomery. Catherine hastened to the bedside of her son and imparted the news in a transport of delight. Charles listened with an indifferent countenance. "What, mon fils," exclaimed the queen, "is it possible that you manifest no interest in hearing of the capture of the murderer of your father?"—"Madame, all things are indifferent; I am dying," responded the king.[1]

Charles during the day asked to see a portrait of his brother Henry, which the painter Lacour had completed for the queen. The king is said to have sighed, and to have uttered words to the effect "that perhaps it would have been better for him had not his brother Henry been exiled from the realm," alluding to the recent conspiracy and his own illness.[2] He, moreover, expressed his delight that he left no male heir, "for," said the king, who had himself suffered so many tribulations during his own minority, "France needs a man to govern her, and not a babe in swaddling clothes with a woman for his support.[3]

At eight o'clock on the following morning, which was Whit-Sunday, May 30th, the grand-almoner Amyot, bishop of Auxerre, and Sorbin de Ste. Foy, confessor to the king, entered his chamber. They found the royal patient evidently sinking fast. Charles made a sign to Sorbin to approach, and in a whisper manifested his desire to confess. Amyot withdrew, and a conference of some length ensued between the king and his confessor, who finally pronounced absolution. Mass was then celebrated at an altar raised at the foot of the

[1] Vie de Charles IX.: Papyre Masson. [2] Ibid.
[3] Aubigné: Hist. Universelle, tome ii. liv. ii. p. 129, et seq. Masson: Vie de Charles IX.

king's bed, Charles previously directing that a precious relic which appertained to the shrine of St. Généviève should be laid on his brow.

On the conclusion of the service Catherine entered the apartment accompanied by the duc d'Alençon, the king and queen of Navarre, the cardinals de Bourbon and d'Esté, the chancellor Birague, d'Auchy captain of the guards, and de Sauve secretary of state. In their presence Charles then declared the king of Poland heir to his dominions and royalties, and nominated the queen his mother regent of the realm. Addressing Monsieur, he exhorted him not to attempt any treasonable design against his brother Henry; "for," said Charles, "kingdoms are acquired only by distinguished virtues, or by the laws of hereditary succession. All, mon frère, who seek otherwise to obtain dominion, perish miserably!" Then turning to his ministers, Charles said, "Do all that the queen my mother commands; obey her majesty as you would have done myself."[1] When these personages had withdrawn, with the exception of Catherine, the king's nurse Philippe Richarde came to take leave of him.[2] Restoratives were next administered to the king, and for a short time his strength rallied, so that Mazille his first physician gave hope that his majesty might yet survive the day. The queen then quitted the chamber to attend high mass in the castle chapel. She found the young queen Elizabeth of Austria on her knees before the altar, weeping; "where," says Ste. Foy, "I believe her

[1] Sorbin de Ste. Foy: Vie de Charles IX. Masson. De Thou, liv. lvii. p. 62.

[2] Some historians assert that Charles had a private interview with the king of Navarre, and commended to his care his queen and lawful daughter, and Marie Touchet with the illegitimate son she had borne him.

majesty was still to be found when the soul of her husband and lord passed from this world."

During this interval Sorbin sat by the bedside of the king encouraging him by pious exhortations and discourse. About one o'clock the difficulty of breathing returned, accompanied by such prostration of strength that the physicians feared every respiration would be the last. Mazille, therefore, proceeded in person to the chapel and informed Catherine of the change, and entreated her majesty's presence in the chamber.[1] Catherine complied, and returning with the cardinal de Bourbon, she took her seat on a coffer close to the bed. Extreme unction was then administered by the bishop of Auxerre, and after the rite Charles took leave of his mother, embracing her and saying, "Adieu, madame! adieu, ma mère!" In a little time he relapsed into a state of partial insensibility, the last sentence he was heard to utter in a whisper being, "If Jesus my Saviour should number me amongst His redeemed!" which Charles slowly repeated three times. The king expired about three o'clock in the afternoon of Whit-Sunday, 1574, the last breath of his troublous life being drawn during the calm repose of sleep.[2]

"King Charles," says a contemporary historian,[3] "was during his life endowed with extraordinary activity; his ideas were strange and original; he was hasty and impetuous; diligent, endowed with wonderful penetration; loving few, but true and cordial in his friendship; temperate, keen in judgment, quick of apprehension, and possessing a most retentive memory. He was passionate beyond control, and knew how to deceive. He was profane in his discourse, but was,

[1] Mém. de Cheverny. Ste. Foy.

[2] Ste. Foy: Vie de Charles IX.

[3] La Popelinière: Hist. de France, liv. xxxvii. fol. 219.

nevertheless, most eloquent in speech. He loved music and poetry, and even composed verses with facility."

Upon few historical points are there greater variations of detail than concerning the closing scenes of the life of Charles IX. Some authors describe his last moments as a fearful scene of blasphemy and malediction; others assert that the king died reviling his mother and accusing her to the king of Navarre of the most terrible crimes; and again, another class of writers recount that the last week of his existence was passed in agonies of remorse, his body being bathed in a bloody sweat, the king finding consolation alone from the lips of his old nurse Philippe Richarde. It is worthy to be noted, however, that Amyot bishop of Auxerre, and Sorbin de Ste. Foy bishop of Nevers, who ministered to the last moments of the king, recount no such scenes in their ample relations; but insinuate that Charles to the last believed himself justified in having sanctioned the proscription of the heretics of his realm, though his majesty betrayed intense remorse for the sins and omissions of his life. M. de Thou, moreover, writes not a word in corroboration of the violence said to have been manifested by the king during his last moments. Indeed, the nature of his malady, his extreme weakness and halting breath, would seem necessarily to preclude emotions of so agitating a nature. The causes of the king's death have been similarly discussed and misrepresented.

It is certain that the health of the king was feeble and precarious from the hour of his birth. "His majesty," says Charles's friend and confessor, "never knew the blessing of a month of uninterrupted health." The constitutions of all the children of Catherine de Medici were infirm and diseased. Her son François II. died at the early age of seventeen. Her two daughters, Elizabeth queen of Spain, and Claude duchesse de Lor-

raine, deceased, having each scarcely accomplished her twenty-fourth year. The health of the duc d'Alençon was feeble; while Marguerite queen of Navarre and the king of Poland alone enjoyed tolerable exemption from sickness. Charles further increased the delicacy of his constitution by the violence of his recreations, such as hard riding, forging bars of iron, playing at tennis for five hours together, blowing the horn, and hallooing vehemently while amusing himself with his hounds; to all of which pastimes the king was immoderately addicted while his health permitted. Nevertheless, there is a mystery attached to the sudden indisposition of the king at Vitry before his brother's departure, which no documents satisfactorily solve. Without directly ascribing the crime of fratricide to Henry, the latter had many hot adherents even in the household of the king. In those days, when religious conflict rendered men athirst for blood, the deed of extinguishing the lingering remnant of life which remained to the unhappy king would have been regarded as a crime the reverse of heinous; especially when its result ensured the preservation of the orthodox faith, the safety of Catherine, and the elevation to the throne of a monarch Catholic, and revered by the Parisian populace as a hero. "Few persons," says de Thou, "could persuade themselves that the death of the king had nothing strange or unnatural."

Brantôme insinuates that the king was poisoned at Vitry with the powdered horn of the sea-unicorn; "but," adds he, "those who committed the deed fared eventually no better." Davila states that Charles died worn out by excess of bodily exertion. Another author[1] attributes his majesty's decease to a vomiting of blood from a ruptured vessel. The king's death is also ascribed to the jealousy of Charles de Gondy seigneur

[1] D'Aubigné.

de la Tour, who, it is said, suspecting Charles of an intrigue with his wife, administered poison to his sovereign by the counsel of the duc de Guise and of the queen-mother.[1] The statement which Catherine made to the maréchal de Matignon concerning the demise of her son is as follows: "The illness of the late king my son was a fever, attended by inflammation of the lungs, which it is thought was caused by the violent exercises in which he indulged. On the examination of his majesty's body after death all the other portions of his body were found sound and entire; it is therefore to be concluded that, had the king not indulged in pursuits so fatiguing, his life might have been long preserved."[2] In a despatch written for the court of England, Catherine thus expresses herself to Fénelon: "M. de la Mothe—Yesterday I admonished you of the lamentable decease of the king my son,[3] but I omitted to state that its cause was a continuous fever and inflammation of the lungs; a malady which the physicians, though aware of, were unable to check. The reason of his majesty's death was more apparent after his body had been examined by his physicians, when it was found that one side of the lungs was nearly destroyed and the other much diseased."[4] De Thou,

[1] Additions à la Traduction Française de M. de Thou, edit. 1740, tome v. p. 18. Madame de la Tour was Helène Brosse de Penthièvre.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Bethune, 3765, fol. 94.

[3] MS. Bibl. Imp. MSS. de St. Germain.

[4] Catherine says: "Il a rendu l'esprit, et quitté les misères de cette vie: m'ayant-laissée outrée de la douleur, que naturellement peut avoir une mère après la perte de la chose qu'elle avoit la plus chérie et précieuse; qui m'a fait desirer de quitter et remettre toutes affaires pour chercher quelque tranquillité de vie. Néantmoins vaincue de l'instante prière qu'il (le roi) m'a faite par ses derniers propos d'embrasser cet office (de regente) au bien de cette couronne, j'ai été contrainte d'accepter cette charge."—Lettre de la Reyne-mère et Regente à son Ambassadeur en Angleterre M. de la Mothe-Fénelon: MSS. de St. Germain, Bibl. Imp. No. 140.

however, states positively that, on opening the body of the king, the stomach was found covered with livid spots,[1] the origin of which no one could decide; "though," says he, "this discovery greatly augmented public suspicion." Ambroise Paré acted at the autopsy of the king as surgeon-in-chief. A few years subsequently Brantôme and Strozzi asked Paré the cause of Charles's decease. "His majesty," replied Paré, evasively, "had destroyed his lungs and other vital parts by constantly and immoderately blowing the horn." The most virulent of Catherine's enemies, it should be stated, refrained from accusing her of having deliberately connived at the assassination of her son—the shadow of the crime is invariably cast over the king of Poland and his adherents. Davila, Ste. Foy, Masson, Brantôme and other contemporary writers, state that the king died holding his mother's hand, and lavishing upon her signal marks of affection. It ought also to be held in remembrance that Charles, whether poisoned or not, was sinking under a natural and incurable malady, which must ere long have consigned him to the tomb; likewise, that his end was attended by all the symptoms which would necessarily result from the final development of the disease.

On the evening of king Charles's decease the queen caused letters to be expedited addressed to the governors of the provinces, notifying the decease of the king, the accession of Henry III., and her own regency. The captive princes were, moreover, compelled to add letters in their own handwriting, protesting their submission, and exhorting all classes of the realm to obedience and unity. "The princes are very content, as I am with

[1] De Thou is the only historian of note who positively states this fact. The king's body was opened twenty-four hours after his death, when probably, from the nature of his malady, decomposition had commenced, which would account for the subsequent hasty closing of Charles's coffin.

them," wrote Catherine to Fénelon; "they having, since the death of the king my son, made good and ample declaration of their desire to combine with me in all things necessary for the preservation of this realm until the arrival of my son the king."[1] Monsieur and the king of Navarre, moreover, sent for Cheverny, the favoured ex-chancellor of the new king, when Monsieur said "that he would act in all things as I counselled him; only, that nothing should now induce him to leave the realm, as the king of Poland had been induced to do!"[2] a refinement of hypocrisy which was appreciated by the acute Cheverny. The princes from the hour of the king's death were subjected to double restraints; their guards never lost sight of them, and their only recreation was permission to visit the saloon of the queen's maids of honour whenever they pleased. The queen rejoiced in the success of her previous combinations, which had resulted in the confusion, imprisonment, or exile of Henry's opponents.

On the following day, Monday, May 31st, deputies from the court of parliament arrived at Vincennes to supplicate her majesty to undertake the regency of the realm during the absence of the king. Catherine graciously assented. The triumph of her policy attained its consummation when, on the third of June, the chambers registered the charter of regency, adding, after the most flattering eulogiums on the virtues and rare ability of the queen-mother, "that her majesty had accepted the onerous charge of regent only out of deference for the earnest supplications of the duc d'Alençon, the king of Navarre, the cardinal de Bour-

[1] Lettre de la Reyne Régente à son Ambassadeur en Angleterre, en date du 11 jour de Juin, 1574: MSS. de St. Germain, Bibl. Imp.

[2] Mém. de Cheverny, année 1574.

bon, and the presidents and members of the high court of parliament.[1]

The body of king Charles was opened, embalmed, and immediately enclosed in a leaden coffin during the afternoon of the 31st of May, the day following his decease. The queen then despatched a courier, the sieur de Chemerault, to inform her son Henry of the death of his brother, and to urge him to repair immediately to take the crown which she had preserved for him. Two days afterwards, Henry's faithful and vigilant mother sent M. de Rambouillet to Warsaw, in case any accident might have happened to Chemerault on his route. The duc d'Alençon accredited Antoine d'Estrées, grand-master of artillery, and the king of Navarre, the Béarnois baron de Miossens, to notify the intelligence to king Henry,—all these gentlemen departing by opposite routes. Lastly, Henry's zealous servant Cheverny, sent a fifth messenger to announce to the king of Poland the important event of his accession, after an absence of five months, to the much-coveted sceptre of France.[2]

On the first day of June Catherine quitted Vincennes, leaving the remains of her deceased son in charge of the duc d'Aumale, the marquis de Boissy, M. de Rostaing chamberlain in ordinary, and of Charles de Gondy seigneur de la Tour, master of the robes.[3] Gondy was most attached to his late royal master; and the demise of the king produced so afflicting an effect upon his mind, that he died of grief in little more than a fortnight afterwards.

[1] De Thou, liv. lvii. Etoile: Journal de Henri III. De Serres: Mém. de l'Etat de la France, etc.

[2] Ibid. Mezeray: Grande Histoire—Vie de Henri III.

[3] Lettre de la Reyne à la Mothe-Fénelon, datée ce 3ème jour de Juin, 1574.

Catherine proceeded to Paris in her coach, accompanied by the duc d'Alençon and by the king of Navarre. Her majesty's carriage was escorted by guards. The people of Paris received the queen with acclamations. As soon as Catherine arrived in Paris she took the most extraordinary precautions, to prevent the escape of the princes and to hinder the organization of any hostile cabal. Neither the king of Navarre nor Monsieur was allowed to leave the Louvre without a pass signed by the queen; a favour, however, which was never once granted to them. Catherine, moreover, on the day following her entry into Paris, caused all the doors and entrances leading into the Louvre to be walled up, leaving open only the principal portal of the palace, which was approached across the drawbridge. The wicket at the end of the drawbridge was guarded night and day by a body of archers without, and by a company of Swiss within.[1] A list of those personages, whether inmates of the palace or not, who had passed the wicket during the four-and-twenty hours preceding, was delivered to her majesty every morning by the officer in command. The windows of the palace looking towards the river were strongly barred,[2] while at all hours of the night the queen herself passed through the guard-chamber and along the corridors; or entered by a master-key into the apartments of her daughter queen Marguerite, and into those of Monsieur to assure

[1] Journal de Henri III.: De Thou.

[2] "La reyne," says Brantôme, "tenois Monsieur et le roy de Navarre si serrez, dans le Bois de Vincennes, qu'ils ne peurent sortir. Après la mort du roy Charles les reserra si bien dans Paris et le Louvre, et grilla si bien un matin leurs fenêtres, au moins celles du roy de Navarre qui étoit logé le plus bas. Je sais ce qu'en dit le roy de Navarre la larme à l'œil—et les surveilla si bien qu'ils ne peurent jamais s'echapper comme ils avoient la volonté, ce qui lu travaillé l'état, et empeché le retour de Pologne du roy."—Vie de Catherine de Medici.

herself that no secret enterprise was plotting. As a final and somewhat ludicrous precaution, Catherine commanded that both ends of the place du Louvre should be walled up, leaving an outlet into the capital only by the great portal of the palace, across the rue des Poulies. When writing to the ambassador Fénelon a few days after the issue of these extraordinary mandates, Catherine says, "M. de la Mothe,—My son d'Alençon and the king of Navarre, as I before wrote to you, have both very emphatically assured me that they will never even concert nor commit for the future any act contrary to the will of the king my son and myself. Nevertheless, by the help of God I know how to keep this kingdom safe and tranquil, and to rule all so well, that on the arrival of my son he will find every one obedient and peaceable."[1]

Ably did Catherine de Medici redeem the promise she had given to her beloved son when she clasped him in her arms for the last time before his departure for Poland, and exclaimed, "Partez, mon fils! partez! vous n'y demeurerez pas long tems!"

[1] Lettre de la Reyne à Fénelon: Bibl. Imp. MSS. de St. Germain, ce 13 jour de Juin, 1574.

CHAPTER IV.

1574.

Military fêtes given in Poland in honour of the king—Death of the palatine of Cracow—Henry's popularity—His depression of spirit—Jealousy excited by the French lords in Henry's train—The correspondence of the king with the princesse de Condé—Royal occupations—Correspondence with Catherine de Medici—Displeasure of the Poles at Henry's melancholy—Proposed marriage of the king with the princess Anne Jagellon—Henry's dismay—Departure of the king for Niepolemitze—His return to Cracow—Receives intimation of the demise of Charles IX.—Arrival of Chemerault—Letter of Catherine de Medici to her son—Effect of the intelligence on the Poles—They oppose the king's departure—Address of the senate—Secret council in the apartments of the king—Resolution taken by Henry to quit Poland—Departure of M. de Bellièvre—Suspicion of the people—They resolve to arrest and detain the king—Flight of Henry III. from Cracow—His adventures—Arrival of the king at Plesse—His interview with the comte de Tenczin—His journey to Vienna—Adventures of M. de Pibrac—His narrow escape from assassination—Reception of Henry III. at Vienna by the Emperor Maximilian—He proceeds to Venice—Splendid entertainment—Ten days of enchantments—Progress of the king to Padua—He journeys to Mantua, and from thence to the court of Turin.

At Cracow the most magnificent festivals continued to inaugurate the accession of Henry de Valois to the throne of the Jagellons. Whilst terror reigned at St. Germain-en-Laye during the conspiracy of Les Jours Gras, Henry was receiving the rapturous homage of his new subjects. Grand military displays were of daily recurrence, each magnate feeling anxious to bring his

armed vassals in array before the king, who was believed to derive peculiar satisfaction from such martial demonstrations. During Passion Week the palatine of Red Russia arrived to pay his homage to king Henry, bringing in his train five hundred Cossacks and one hundred Tartar prisoners. The military fêtes were, however, suspended by the death of the palatine of Cracow, who had been the chief opponent against Henry's election. The decease of Dambrowicz was attributed to his disappointment at perceiving that, despite his protests and opposition, the crown firmly rested on Henry's head; and that his factious enmity had consequently left him without power or credit in the council of the new sovereign. "The palatine of Cracow," says a contemporary,[1] "died suddenly. It never was ascertained whether from natural causes or from excessive chagrin at witnessing the royal authority becoming daily more confirmed." The son-in-law of the deceased magnate Sborowski, at whose nuptial feast Henry had danced on Shrove Tuesday, succeeded to the dignity of palatine of Cracow and Casimiria.

Henry, meanwhile, continued to give the Poles reason to exult in their choice of a monarch. His varied acquirements astonished and delighted his subjects; while his genial manner and the incomparable address with which Henry seemed to interest himself in the personal affairs of his nobles, excited their gratitude and enhanced their self-appreciation. This royal talisman Henry owed to his mother Catherine, for it was one of the most choice and subtle secrets of that art of diplomacy in which she reigned an unrivalled mistress. The sumptuousness of the king's equipage, and the luxurious and strange fashions which the lords

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii. p. 36. La Vie et Mœurs de Messire Guy du Faur, Seigneur de Pybrac: faite en Latin par Messire Charles Paschal, Ambassadeur aux Grisons, 1617.

of his retinue introduced, had also an attraction for the Polish magnates. When Henry and his cortège of cavaliers appeared in the streets of Cracow, the burghers flocked to behold a prince by repute so valiant and accomplished; while in the country the boors left their occupations and sometimes traversed leagues to satiate their curiosity by gazing on a sovereign, the fame of whose splendour had penetrated even to their hovels on the Sarmatian wilds.

Notwithstanding the honours and the enthusiastic reception everywhere lavished upon him, the spirit of Henry grew more and more depressed. The manners of the people, the aspect of the country, and the reserve of the women of the court, were alike repugnant to him. In Poland the sovereign was always expected to enact the king; no privacy was permissible in which he might unbend from his anointed dignity. At any hour of the twenty-four the magnates, whose privileges gave them access whenever they chose to the presence of the sovereign, expected to behold their king and chieftain, but not in the guise of a brilliant masquerader, or bound on a midnight brawl or a nocturnal intrigue. Hence, in Poland such frolics as had temporarily impoverished Nantouillet, and ransacked his splendid hôtel, became inadmissible. This constant supervision was also exceedingly distasteful to the king. As the French nobles who accompanied him from Paris gradually took leave and withdrew, Henry felt still more keenly "his exile"—for such to his confidential servants he ever termed his acceptance of the Polish crown. The duc de Nevers, the marquises de Mayenne and d'Elbœuf, the maréchal de Retz, and Schomberg, Tavannes, and Henry's numerous suite of French gentlemen, to the number of several hundred, took leave of their royal master, and, as had been stipulated by the Polish ambassadors, returned to France on the

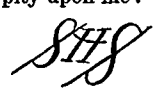
termination of the coronation fêtes. There now remained in Henry's service only Villequier, Souvré, du Guast, Revol, Jacques Lévy de Quélus, Bellegarde, de Gordes, and two brothers of the house of Balzac-d'Antragues, and Pibrac, without whose support and fluent eloquence Henry would have found his exile still more intolerable. These were the favoured courtiers of Henry de Valois, and the future *minions* or potent favourites of the king of France and Poland. The Polish magnates looked with jealous eye on this small band of Henry's former associates. Unpropitiated by the departure of the majority, their courtesies were generally so grudgingly dispensed, that Henry was compelled to the reluctant conviction that, in a few months these cavaliers would no longer be tolerated.

The thought of the princesse de Condé was not the least bitter of Henry's reminiscences. Her portrait he never laid aside; and sometimes, it is recorded, that the king sat for hours contemplating the beautiful face of Marie, and mourning their separation with tears. When informed of the flight of Condé from St. Germain, Henry testified fierce delight, though aware that the safety of the realm of France was endangered by that event. If the princess delayed her response to his letters, or wrote as the king deemed coldly, Henry fell into paroxysms of despair and petulant reproach. One of these letters, written at this period and addressed to the duchesse de Nevers, sister of the princess, is extant, signed by the king with the private cypher he always used when corresponding with Marie. He therein implores the duchess to use her influence over the mind of her sister for the more perfect sealing of their *liaison*, respecting the propriety of which it would appear that the princess, about to become a mother, began to doubt. The king enforces his passionate pleadings, as will be seen, by threats; for Henry, in his wildest impulses of

love, generosity, or royal magnanimity, could never totally veil the real meanness of his disposition.

HENRY KING OF POLAND TO THE DUCHESSE DE NEVERS.

I am more disheartened and weary than I have ever before been. I supplicate you, madame, inasmuch as you hold me for your friend, and are persuaded that I bear you affection and esteem myself your very devoted and faithful friend and kinsman, help me to the remedy known by you to be so necessary. I beseech you, madame, with tears and with clasped hands, to heed my prayer! You know well what it is to love with absorbing passion: judge, then, whether I merit contempt from, Madame our dearest friend, who, whatsoever she may say, possesses unbounded influence, when she is pleased to assert it, over myself. It will be in my power, on more than one future occasion, to testify my gratitude to you when such may be holden to be neither disagreeable nor inopportune. If you love me, madame, respect will be shown to those parties[1] who hold themselves aloof from the court, and who are neither desirous nor wishful to serve me and her towards whom I bear all the regard in the world; and on this last I hold you, madame, as my surety, if indeed you deem me not to be a liar. You will, I feel convinced, answer for me. Should I receive the indignity with which I am threatened, after the promise that she has made me, I shall feel myself so disobliged and scorned, that I must deem such cause sufficient never more to stand her friend—though to continue such, in my rage and miserable despair, I would deny everything and everybody. I swear to you, madame, that such is now my distress, that for two hours past my eyes have been blinded with tears. Have pity upon me!



If it will afford you pleasure—learn, that there never can be any feeling between us two[2] but either firm friendship or enmity.[3]

This passionate epistle seems to have produced its effect; for the correspondence between Henry and the

[1] Henry probably alluded to the prince de Condé.

[2] Between king Henry, and the princesse de Condé.

[3] MS. Bibl. Imp.: MSS. de Béth. No. 8794, fol. 21; also, MS. Fontanieu, 331.

princess was persevered in with unabated constancy. The king's leisure continued to be consumed in writing billets of the most tender description, or in perusing those sent him by Marie, one of which he constantly wore next to his heart. His poet Desportes composed elegies and sonnets bewailing the absence and celebrating the charms of the princess, each of which received a golden reward from the king. Henry, it is said, at this period made a solemn promise to the ducs de Nevers and de Guise, the brothers-in-law of Marie, that if ever he returned to France as king, one of his first royal acts should be to despatch an envoy to the Holy See, praying for the dissolution of the marriage-tie between the prince and princesse de Condé, on the ground of the heresy of the former. The union annulled, Henry engaged to place Marie upon the throne of France; a project which, as far as regarded the descent of the princesse de Condé, would have challenged little opposition.[1] Sometimes Henry in his passionate transports traced the cypher appended to his love-effu-

[1] Marie de Clèves, descended paternally from the potent ducal house of la Marck, of Clèves and Juliers. The branch established in France descended from Engilbert, second son of John duke of Clèves, who had espoused Isabel de Bourgogne, countess of Nevers, Auxerre, and d'Eu. Engilbert took his mother's title and became comte de Nevers, and married Charlotte de Bourbon, daughter of Jean comte de Vendôme. The grandson of Engilbert, François de Clèves, the father of the princesse de Condé, married Marguerite de Bourbon, sister of Antoine king of Navarre, and by her left one son, who died childless in 1561; and three daughters—Henriette duchesse de Nevers, Catherine duchesse de Guise, and Marie princesse de Condé—co-heiresses. The elder branch of Clèves became extinct in 1609. The third branch expired with the princesse d'Arembourg, wife of Jean de Ligne, baron de Barbançon. The fourth ended on the decease of the last duke of Bouillon without male issue. The duke's only daughter, Louise, married the marquis de la Boulaye, who assumed the name and arms of la Marck. The only male representatives of the ancient ducs de Clèves are the German counts de Lumay.

sions with his own blood, while the tone of all expressed inviolable fidelity, and contained pledges of future regal honours.

The king, however, wrote daily to his mother copious details of his position. He required her advice on all political matters, appealed to her sympathy and affection, and transmitted to her unlimited powers to rule his French appanages as she deemed expedient. With Cheverny the king frequently corresponded; and also with his sister Claude and her husband, the duke of Lorraine. As days and weeks passed by, the correspondences of the king multiplied; he received with transport every line written under the sky of his beloved France, and then hungered for more news with avidity. Towards mid-Lent the melancholy and reserve of the king augmented, especially when the temporary cessation of the rejoicings allowed Henry longer space for reflection and solitude. When the king then appeared in public, the bright and joyous animation which once had so fascinated the Polish lords, had vanished; instead, the king now sought solitude, and secluded himself with his French favourites, which of course added to the unpopularity of the latter. When comment was made on the alteration in his majesty's deportment, Villequier replied, "That the depression of the king was partly owing to the fatigue of his journey and its subsequent pageants; and partly to the evil news which reached his majesty from Paris relative to the indifferent health of his brother the king." It was at this season, during one of the king's perturbed and restless nights, that Henry sent for his physician Miron,[1] and made that important revelation concerning the history of the massacre of Paris.

[1] Some authors believe that M. de Souvré was the personage whom the king burdened with his confidence on this occasion. Miron, however, was subsequently trusted by Henry III. in all his private projects

Miron says, "That his majesty being agitated by a variety of solicitudes and reminiscences which permitted him not to snatch a moment's repose, summoned him from his bed by a valet-de-chambre about three o'clock in the morning." As soon as Henry saw Miron, he exclaimed, "Ah, monsieur, I have sent for you to confide the disquietudes which have this night very greatly troubled me, especially concerning the execution made on St. Bartholomew's Eve, the true relation of which you may not have heard.—I will now relate the matter faithfully." Miron then dismissed the pagés in attendance, and, sitting down on a coffer at the foot of the king's bed, Henry commenced his relation. On its conclusion the king protested that he had avowed the whole without reservation, saying, "You have now heard the true history of la St. Barthélemy, the remembrance of which has this night so troubled my mind."[1] Ample cause indeed was there that the memory of that blood-stained night should haunt Henry's memory—the murder of Coligny; the assault of infuriated multitudes; the transports of the maddened king; and the clangour of the bells of St. Germain and of the Palais, as they tolled the knell of the Huguenots, were reminiscences of horror not lightly to be effaced.

The melancholy and isolation of their king began at length to be very displeasing to the Polish lords; and they exhibited their resentment by inflicting a thousand slights on the young nobles, the sharers of the king's seclusion. Murmurs became rife; and one magnate more daring than his peers presumed to remark in Henry's presence, "that kings ought not to show par-

of vengeance; and therefore there seems no reason to deem that he was not called by his master to listen to his statement respecting *la St. Barthélemy.*

[1] Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, 500, fol. 68.

tialities according to their inclinations, but in measure as they were surrounded by deserving personages. Nevertheless, it was always dangerous and impolitic for princes to demonstrate preferences; and especially unsatisfactory to their subjects when they beheld with much chagrin the favoured objects aspire to direct the royal authority, pastimes, and deportment!"[1] Roused at length from his lethargy by the demeanour of the magnates, and by the remonstrances of the French ambassador Bellièvre, Henry, with sudden impulse, declared his readiness, if required of him, to proceed to Warsaw for the Easter holidays; "and from thenceforth," says a historian,[2] "there was nothing heard of for some time at the court but tourneys, balls, hunting parties, banquets, drinking bouts,—for the latter are the usage in that country."

The business of state since the arrival of the king of Poland had been almost exclusively confined to the necessary forms requisite for the inauguration of the new reign, the regulation of the privy council, and the despatch of fresh powers, issued in Henry's name, to distant functionaries. Three political projects had been alone discussed in the senate, which continued its session—namely, the clauses of a treaty about to be concluded with the emperor; the measures of repression needful to repel the threatened descent of the Czar of Muscovy on the grand duchy of Lithuania; and the examination of the articles of Sandomeir and Plock, which guaranteed complete religious toleration to dissidents from the Romish church. Many angry and tumultuous debates ensued on this latter question in the diet; but as the members could not agree upon the amount of privilege to be conceded, nor on the form in which these articles were to be presented for the ratification

[1] Mathieu: Hist. du Règne de Henri III., liv. vii. p. 386.
[2] Mathieu: Ibid.

of the sovereign, Henry had refrained as yet from useless interposition on a subject which must have rendered him unpopular with certain classes of his subjects.

The senate, perceiving that their king had apparently recovered his wonted *enjouement*, and believing that Henry perhaps suffered from the burden of his solitary state, deputed certain influential members to wait upon his majesty, and to represent how greatly it would increase the satisfaction of his subjects if he would take a consort. The senators added, "that it was the universal wish that Henry should espouse the princess Anne Jagellon, the daughter and sister of their late revered monarchs."[1] Henry was so overwhelmed at this proposition that he did not immediately reply. One of the suite, M. de Villequier, however, flippantly commented on the age of the princess, which he averred approached fifty years; and therefore it could not be expected, he said, that a young monarch like king Henry, heir-presumptive, moreover, to the crown of France, would marry a consort from whom he could not hope to obtain offspring. One of the magnates significantly remarked that Henry was now king of Poland, and that his crown was elective, and not hereditary, and therefore it mattered little to the Poles whether the future queen bore offspring or not. Henry then coldly dismissed the deputies, promising to consider the subject, and to make his final resolve known to the senate. This unwelcome proposition greatly added to Henry's despondency. His embarrassments were further augmented by the presence of the princess Anne in Cracow, who inhabited a suite of rooms in the royal palace under the same roof with himself. The despatches, however, which Henry received from Paris augured prompt relief. The health of Charles IX. was breaking; and

[1] Mezeray. Mathieu. De Thou. Cromar: Hist. de Pologne.

apparently no human power could long avert the final catastrophe. To drown his cares, and the disquietude which assailed him relative to the precarious condition of affairs in France—which but for the able manœuvring of queen Catherine must have terminated in his exclusion from the succession—the king after Easter commanded a series of gorgeous banquets, revels, and other pastimes. He gallantly entertained the princess Anne and the ladies of her court, and seemed to have altogether recovered his energy and outward content.

On Whit-Sunday, the day on which Charles IX. expired, the king entertained the princess Anne, the marquis of Brandenburg, and the duke of Leiningen at a banquet, which was followed by a joust and a tilt at the ring, in which Henry especially distinguished himself. His majesty also displayed his skill in archery, shooting with a Tartar bow, "all which accomplishments greatly increased the high opinion which the magnates of the court entertained respecting his majesty's dexterity and prowess."[1] The following day, while the parliament of Paris was humbly entreating Catherine to accept the regency of the realm, Henry, attended by his French courtiers and by a train of Polish nobles, departed from Cracow for a sojourn of a few days at Niepolemitze, a castle appertaining to the crown about twelve miles from the capital. Grand boar-hunts in the dense forests adjacent were Henry's pastime for several subsequent days. During his residence at Niepolemitze the king received despatches from France, relating the sequel of the conspiracy of Les Jours Gras, and the execution done on the traitors la Mole and Coconnas. The queen also apprized her son of the flight of Condé from St. Jean d'Angely to Heidelberg,

[1] La Déclaration des Seigneurs Polonnais sur le Retour du Roy en France, 1574. Archives Curieuses de l'Histoire de France, tome ix. 1 série.

to negotiate for the levy of an army of Reiters to join that of la Noue and Montgomery. Also Catherine notified the extremity of his brother the king, and her hope of being able to maintain her supremacy over affairs, seeing that the chief conspirators, the duc d'Alençon, the king of Navarre, Montmorency, and Cossé were in her power. The anxiety of the king to learn news from France became too absorbing to permit of dissimulation. He spent the nights in restless pacings about his chamber, solacing himself with exultant anticipations of his approaching return to Paris.

After a sojourn of ten days at Niepolemitze the king again took up his abode in Cracow. On the evening after his return the imperial ambassador privately waited upon his majesty and imparted the news of the decease of Charles IX., which he had just learned by a despatch from Vienna. The following day, June 13th, Chemerault arrived. Bending the knee, he hailed Henry as king of France and Poland, and placed in his majesty's hands the letter intrusted to his care by Catherine de Medici. This letter was as follows:—

QUEEN CATHERINE TO HENRY KING OF FRANCE AND POLAND.

Monsieur mon Fils,—I despatch Chemerault to you to impart the piteous sorrow which has befallen me—I who have so oft witnessed the decease of my children! May God bereave me of my own life before he again dooms me to such affliction! for the spectacle would drive me to despair. The love which your brother showed me at the end has, however, left its consoling influences. He prayed me earnestly to summon you; and until your arrival commanded me to undertake the administration of this realm. He charged me to execute justice on the prisoners,[1] whom he held answerable for all the evil which afflicts the kingdom. Afterwards he bade me farewell, and asked me to bestow upon him a final embrace—the which request nearly killed me with anguish. Never did any man expire in more perfect possession of his faculties:

[1] Montgomery and the other chieftains of revolt then incarcerated in the Conciergerie.

the king spoke to his brothers, to the cardinal de Bourbon, the chancellor and secretaries of state, to the captain of the guards and of the Swiss, commanding them all to obey me until you arrived, and entreating them to remain your faithful subjects, and commending to their patriotism the interests of this kingdom. He told them that you had always loved, honoured, and obeyed him, never having given him solicitude, but on the contrary good service. He received the Holy Eucharist during the morning, and expired about four o'clock afternoon, showing a most Christian and holy example, such as has never been surpassed. His last words were—'Ah, ma mère!'

This event has not failed to rend me with grief of heart, my sole consolation being the thought of soon seeing you again, and that God has called you back from whence you desire to return, with every honour and grandeur of circumstance. Nevertheless, mon fils, let not your joy at returning amongst us make you oblivious of the fact that you have lost a good brother and protector; for the world was wide enough to contain you both in power and glory without this disaster; but since it has pleased the Almighty that I should so often be tried and visited by affliction, I praise His Name and pray for patience and the consolation of seeing you soon in good health. If I came to endure such unutterable grief as to lose you too, my son, I should cause myself to be buried alive with you. This anxiety, therefore, makes me supplicate you very earnestly to examine well the route you will traverse. I should counsel you well to pass through the dominions of the emperor and Italy, rather than through Germany, being, as you are now, king of France. The princes of Germany have too many griefs and disputes to settle with this realm to render such passage safe. I moreover advise that you cause yourself to be represented by a gentleman who will bear your excuses to these said German princes, that you have been necessitated to take another route; and to thank them for the honourable reception which they gave you four months ago on your journey to Poland. M. de Bellièvre would be a fit personage for this mission: you will, however, reflect and decide.

Respecting your departure from Poland, mon fils, delay it not an instant. Take heed also that your subjects, the Poles, detain you not until you have introduced order into the affairs of their kingdom. Remain not, for we have urgent need of your presence here, and myself in particular, for I die daily of eagerness to see you, and find in nothing consolation. Mon fils, you know my great love for you, so that when I reflect you will never more leave me, I try to take the sad remainder patiently. It would, nevertheless, be advisable to leave some one behind who could conduct the affairs of the realm of Poland, so that that crown

may remain in your own possession, in that of your brother, or eventually be inherited by the second son, who may be born to you. Your magnates, I should believe, would favourably entertain such a design, as they would reign as kings and supreme until the advent of such ruler as you may send them; while for yourself it would be glorious to hold the sceptre of two kingdoms—the one rich as possible, the other of great territory and dignity.

As for this kingdom, mon fils, recognize the great gift which God has made you in elevating you to this throne, and govern wisely and prudently for the honour of the Almighty and the welfare of your people. In the first place, take heed that you make yourself not subservient to your servants, for you are no longer Monsieur, whose policy it was to say "je gaignerai!" but a king whom all must serve, revere, and obey. Protect those who are devoted to your service, and confer upon them benefits; but faction, partialities, and intimates are now no longer for you. I pray you, mon fils, by the love of God, to give nothing, and to promise nothing until your arrival here. I will present to you those who have served you well and loyally, and will keep for your distribution all posts, offices, and benefices which may, between this and your arrival, fall vacant.

I believe, mon fils, that you will not disavow nor annul the act of your deceased brother in committing to me the chief rule over this realm. I will restore it to you, by the grace of God, entire and at peace. It will be a joyous reward for the sorrows and troubles of past years. But, my son, reflect and determine not to heap all honours and distinctions on one individual, as has been the fatal fashion in this realm hitherto. Discontent and disaffection have been the result of this system; but govern with the experience which your sojourn in Poland has given you—never, I feel persuaded, has there been a wiser king over that realm than yourself. I swear to you, my son, that your election to the throne of Poland and your departure from this realm have not been injurious to you, as I promised, nor has it caused you a diminution of honour or repute. The evil of your departure has alone fallen upon me; for I have suffered grief upon grief. I believe that your return will heap upon me gladness upon gladness, and that from henceforth neither sorrow nor anxiety will assail me. I pray God fervently to bring you back, mon fils, in good health, and speedily.

Written at this Bois de Vincennes the last day of May, 1574, by your good and affectionate mother, if ever there existed one on earth, CATHERINE.[1]

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[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, vols. 499, 500, and 501.

This epistle, breathing as it did the ardent and absorbing affection which Catherine felt for her favourite son, moved Henry to tears. He retired, taking his mother's letter with him, into his cabinet, and declined at that time to receive the congratulations of his courtiers. Henry's joy at his accession to the throne of France was overwhelming, though its outward demonstration was subdued by the regret which decency required his majesty to assume for his brother's demise; and by the disquietude occasioned by his dread of the hostile designs of the princes in league with the Huguenots of France.

The news of Charles's death soon circulated throughout the capital, and created indescribable consternation. The people thronged the streets discussing the event and Henry's accession to the crown of France, and menaces were heard that their king should never be suffered to depart. The senate assembled and voted an address of condolence to the king, which on the afternoon of Sunday, June 13th, was received by Henry. It stated the desire of Poland that Henry should still retain the crown; it assured his majesty that wherever he went the heart of the people of Poland and Lithuania would be with him, and that they should always remain his humble subjects. Finally, the address besought his majesty not to quit the realm without duly notifying such intent to the senate; or before he had appointed men approved and able to officiate as his viceroys.[1] Nothing could be fairer than this address, to which Henry returned a courteous reply, without, however, pledging himself to grant its petition. Nevertheless, the attitude of the people continued so tumultuous—it being rumoured that the king would immediately and secretly set out for Paris, while some of

[1] Déclaration des Seigneurs de Pologne sur le Retour du Roy en France, etc. De Thou.

the magnates even suggested that Henry should be enjoined to show his gratitude for his election by forthwith issuing letters-patent appointing his mother or his brother to act as viceroy over France—that the king found it requisite to make some tranquillizing concession. He, therefore, gave orders that preparation should be made for a splendid service to be performed on the following Sunday for his deceased brother in the cathedral;[1] he commanded the courtiers to assume mourning habiliments, while his *maréchaux de logis* bought up all the black serge in Cracow to drape the walls of his majesty's private apartments. Henry, moreover, issued other mandates, which at length partially convinced the people that the king meditated no sudden departure.

During the night of Monday, the 14th of June, a secret council of the principal French nobles was holden in Henry's private apartment. There were present the ambassador Bellièvre, Pibrac, Bellegarde, Souvré, Villequier, Larchant, Quélus, and others. The first proposition was unanimously agreed to, which was secretly to despatch on the morrow the learned advocate Jacques d'Espesses to the queen-regent, the bearer of letters-patent confirmatory of the act of regency signed by the late king. The second point submitted by the king was the course it was most expedient to take respecting his journey to France. The queen-regent had conjured her son to set out with the least possible delay to take possession of his realm. Bellièvre first gave his opinion. He represented to his royal master the affectionate confidence shown him by his new subjects, and exhorted him not to abdicate a throne which had been so honourably conferred. He proceeded to show that the future prosperity of France might greatly depend upon the prudence of his present measures; for that if he con-

[1] Vie et Faits Notables de Henri de Valois de 1551 à 1559—1589.

ceded something to the natural mortification and distress of the Polish nobles at the prospect of losing their king, it would eventually be no difficult negotiation to transfer the crown of Poland to the duc d'Alençon, who would thus be removed from France. Bellièvre therefore counselled the king to trust in the abilities of the queen his mother, and not to abandon Poland until the requirements of the senate were accomplished and the government settled; adding, "the glory of your majesty's military renown still imposes on the rebels of your realm; if you, therefore, sully this fame by an inglorious departure hence, the troubles of France will increase!"[1] Villequier thereupon remarked, that the forms and delays exacted by the senate must retard his majesty's departure for nearly a year. Bellièvre and Pibrac assented; but nevertheless persisted in advising the king to quit Poland in as great state and honour as he had been escorted thither to take possession of the crown; and again insisting that queen Catherine would know how to govern France pending his majesty's absence. Réné de Villequier and Souvré, who knew their master's wishes, and his intention to follow implicitly the advice of his mother, and who themselves pined for France, resolutely combated this counsel. "His majesty," exclaimed Villequier, "is bound to follow the advice of the queen his mother, for her majesty being on the spot is the best judge of the political juncture. The position of the realm of France, the divisions amongst the nobles, the revolt of princes of the blood, and the disaffection of the people render imperative the presence of the sovereign. Messieurs! we hear that already it has been published throughout France that the king is a prisoner in Poland and can-

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps. liv. lvii. Mezeray: Grande Histoire. Vies de Charles IX. et de Henri III.—Pascal. MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth. Mathieu: Hist. de Henri III.

not claim his hereditary crown! When once his majesty's departure is an established fact, we shall hear little of fresh risings. As for waiting for the senate to acquiesce in our departure, no reasons that we can allege will ever be deemed satisfactory and imperative by the members. His majesty's immediate departure will be more than authorized by the urgency of the crisis. Let us, therefore, messieurs, prepare for departure with resolution and secrecy, not wasting our precious moments in vain deliberation, but in forestalling all things, that their issue may justify our resolution."[1] Souvré then remarked that in the space of a year the entrance into France might be rendered impossible to the king by Condé and his army of Germans. Pibrac in reply represented the discredit of an undignified flight, and the peril which the king must incur from the probable hostility of the princes through whose dominions he would be compelled to pass. Henry, however, expressed the keenest apprehension of losing the French crown; and spoke at some length on the factions and plots organized to exclude him from France. He commented on the hostile attitude of the queen of England, who would, he said, take advantage of the interregnum to send succours to the Huguenots of France through the port of La Rochelle; and he expressed his conviction that his Polish subjects had determined to throw every obstacle in the way of his departure. Finally, Henry declared himself resolved not only to risk the crown of Poland but life itself to regain the beloved realm of France. His majesty having made so peremptory a declaration, there was nothing further to be debated, excepting the most feasible mode of putting this resolution into execution. It was determined that the king's departure should be attempted on Friday, the

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps. Pascal: Vie de Pibrac. Mathieu, liv. vii.

18th of June, and meanwhile every means resorted to in order to deceive the nobles and the people of Cracow into a belief that his majesty was content to indefinitely postpone his journey.[1]

The misgivings of king Henry relative to the determination of the Poles to prevent his departure were little exaggerated; for the senate had resolved at any risk to compel a tedious delay for the regulation of treaties between the realms of France and Poland, and the appointment of viceroys and other officers of state. To the powerful oligarchy which dominated in Poland, the prospect of the eventual departure of Henry was not distasteful, as Catherine had divined; for the future administration being settled on a basis approved by the magnates, Poland would gain the advantage of being governed by her own nobles, and moreover acquire the military and diplomatic *prestige* of a union with France during the life of Henry III.

The following day Henry granted public audience to the ambassador Bellièvre, who, as it had been concerted, demanded licence to return immediately to France, as his mission ended with the decease of Charles IX.[2] Permission was at once accorded by the king. The same day, therefore, Tuesday, June 15th, the ambassador quitted Cracow with his suite, no obstacle being opposed by the senate. The object of this journey was to prepare the way for Henry's flight. Bellièvre accordingly, at all the principal towns on the route, ordered small relays of horses and provisions to be provided for the accommodation of illustrious members of his suite, who, he alleged, had not been able to make their preparations for departure with sufficient speed.

[1] Ibid. See last note.

[2] "Pomponne de Bellièvre, ambassadeur de France à la cour de Pologne, prétexta la mort de Charles IX. pour se retirer. Il s'étoit concerté avec Henri III.; et il lui tenoit des relais prêts."

Bellièvre carried from Poland all Henry's most valuable jewels and papers; also various documents appertaining to the Polish archives, the act of the king's election, and many of the charters confirming the privileges of the nobles which he had subscribed. His majesty also sent back to France a large sum of money. On the same day Henry likewise openly despatched a courier[1] to his mother with a confirmation of her regency—these letters-patent being drawn at the council in the presence of the palatine of Cracow and others.

Until Friday, the 18th of June, the day fixed for Henry's departure, all remained tranquil in Cracow, though the movements of the French were jealously scrutinized. The king, on the morning of the 18th, despatched Chemerault—the cavalier who had brought him the news of the death of Charles IX.—ostensibly to carry fresh letters to the queen-regent, but in reality to wait at a certain hamlet, until he was joined by the king, a few leagues from the capital. Chemerault had undertaken to act as guide, and to conduct the king safely to the Austrian frontier. A few hours subsequently a train of ten mules of burden, laden with coffers, was seen to quit the city. This naturally occasioned curiosity; but when the people ascertained that the baggage appertained to M. de Villequier, grand-master of the household, their suspicion became vehemently excited. Henry for long afterwards showed extreme resentment at his favourite for having cared more for his jewels and effects than for the security of his master's royal person. As the king was dining, therefore, the steward of the household, one Francisco Alemanni, a naturalized Italian who had quitted Italy

[1] "Le Mardi, 6 Juillet, les lettres patentes du roy Henri III. données à Cracovie le 15 Juin pour la confirmation et ampliation du pouvoir de la reine-mère touchant la régence furent publiées et registrées en la cour, et depuis imprimées.—Journal de Henri III.

in the train of queen Bona, approached Henry, and hurriedly informed him "that the city was in uproar, the populace being much excited at a rumour that his majesty intended secretly to depart during the day." Villequier's imprudence had exposed Henry to serious inconvenience and even peril. He, therefore, treating this address as an assumption, gave no reply to the intimation made by Alemanni. Presently, however, the comte de Tenczin, hereditary chamberlain, appeared, and with much outward concern repeated Alemanni's statement, adding that "the city and senate deplored the king's intended departure." "Monseigneur," replied Henry, who had now recovered his presence of mind, "a man of comprehension like yourself will easily perceive that it is not my intention to depart. My nobles know what I resolved upon in council in their presence. As for the populace, it is better to leave this their reverie uncontradicted! I care little for the rumour, but much for my own reputation!" Whilst the king dined the hall gradually filled with courtiers, whose clouded countenances and the curious manner in which they scrutinized Henry and his French cavaliers, attested the faith generally placed in the rumour. The king exerted himself more than usual to appear at ease, and to talk upon indifferent subjects with those around. The comte de Tenczin, meanwhile, publicly reported Henry's words, and stated that he himself placed no belief in the alleged project of evasion. The clamour, however, still continued to increase; and towards the evening Tenczin again entered the royal presence to announce that the senate had ordered guards to be placed at the entrances of the palace, and had given instructions to them to arrest any who should that night attempt to stir without its precincts, even not excepting his majesty himself.[1] Henry thereupon

[1] Mathieu: Hist. du Règne de Henri III. liv. vii.

made some indifferent remark, but did not manifest the slightest resentment at this strange act of authority on the part of the senate. This apparent calmness, however, had the Poles known their sovereign's disposition better, should have been accepted as a convincing proof of the truth of the report. The senate had presumed to defy his will, but Henry felt himself strong in his own peculiar faculty of deceit and counterplot. "Oh, monsieur le comte," carelessly observed his majesty to his chamberlain, "the senate has taken an excellent method of defeating such design, had it only existed. However, to tranquillize all my good subjects, I will now retire to bed in the presence of you all; then, when you have seen me sound asleep, this panic may perhaps subside." The king accordingly retired to his chamber, attended by Tenczin, Alemanni, Villequier, the bishop of Cracow, and a crowd of palace functionaries. In presence of these personages Henry supped, and then retired to bed, keeping the courtiers in merry discourse for a considerable time, and appearing so unconcerned and indifferent as to convince all present that he meditated no nocturnal enterprise. Henry, when he considered that the Polish magnates were thoroughly duped, made a sign to the chamberlain that he wished to sleep. Tenczin then drew the curtain of the king's bed, while a page placed his sword and a taper upon a small table close at hand—a ceremony understood as a signal to all to quit the apartment excepting the chief chamberlain, who usually remained standing at the foot of the couch until the king slept.

The nobles who were to share Henry's flight, meanwhile assembled to sup in the apartments of M. de Souvré, which were adjacent to the suite occupied by the king. When the repast was over, they silently proceeded each to the performance of the part assigned to him in the drama of his majesty's evasion. Pibrac,

Villequier, Quélus, and Beauvais-Nangis quitted the palace, and after some difficulty were suffered to pass by the sentinels on guard, to whom they were well known, on the assurance given by these young nobles that they were bound on a frolic in the town. Their destination, however, was a ruined chapel about half a league from the gate of St. Florian, where Carquereau, one of Henry's equerries, was to be waiting with horses despatched by the king some days before in the train of Bellièvre, and which were to be sent back by the latter to the place of rendezvous. An enterprise of more precarious result could scarcely be imagined, for there was no certainty of co-operation between those engaged; nor even had it been ascertained that the share assigned to any one of the confederates could be executed. Henry, however, was resolved to make the venture.[1]

The comte de Tenczin quitted the apartment as soon as his royal master appeared to sleep, and proceeded to make his report accordingly to the palatine of Cracow and the archbishop of Gnesen, who were waiting in the palace. Souvré, Larchant, Miron, Henry's confidential physician, and Charles de Danzay, then softly entered the king's chamber, and barred the door against intruders. Henry sprang from his bed, and was quickly attired again by Souvré. He then entered his private cabinet, and held a conference with Danzay, who had been selected for the dangerous post of remaining behind to notify the king's departure to the senate; and who was now first initiated in the secret of the enterprise. Henry commanded Danzay to represent to the senators that necessity had compelled his flight; that news had reached him of the intended march of Condé upon the realm of France with an army of German Huguenots. His majesty, therefore, prayed the senate to despatch

[1] Pascal: Vie de Pibrac. Mathieu, liv. vii.

to him ambassadors in Italy or France; "when in concert with them he would decree all things necessary for the honour and welfare of his realm of Poland."[1] Henry next delivered to M. de Danzay letters written in his own hand for the palatine of Cracow; for Walski the vice-chancellor; and for prince Radzivill, grand-marshal of Lithuania. Danzay promised to obey his majesty to the letter; and readily undertook the mission, and also that of remaining in the royal apartment until the fugitives were safe from pursuit.

The most difficult part of the enterprise remained to be accomplished, that of getting the king safely without the palace; for the extraordinary decision taken by the senate to place guards at the various outlets had never been contemplated. It so happened that there was a small door at the termination of a passage leading from the culinary offices, which opened at the back of the castle on a fauxbourg of Cracow without the walls. This postern, which had been opened exclusively for the use of the menials of the royal household, had been frequently found serviceable by the cavaliers of Henry's court when abroad during the night; and it was now hoped it might afford a way for the escape of the king. Souvré having ascertained that no sentinel had been placed at that outlet, Miron was therefore despatched, when all was ready for the departure of the king, to reconnoitre; and to ascertain whether exit were still possible by this door. After ten minutes of absence he re-appeared, stating that he found the door ajar, and was returning to impart the news, when Alemanni[2] suddenly issued from the kitchen, being evidently on the watch, and after carefully surveying the passage—without, however, discovering Miron, who was sheltered by a projection in the staircase wall—

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii.

[2] Steward of the household.

he gave orders for the postern to be locked, and the key brought to himself.

The king, in despair, was about to return to his bed, and abandon the enterprise altogether, when Souvré encouraged his majesty to persist, and to rely upon his address for escape from the dilemma. The king, attended by Souvré, Larchant, and Miron, therefore quitted his chamber, and traversing the rooms appertaining to the latter, which opened on a back corridor of the castle, descended a staircase leading to the kitchens. Souvré walked first; then the king, who was followed by the other two gentlemen. They safely reached the passage, from whence another dark flight of steps led down to a spacious kitchen. As they approached, the voice of Alemanni, speaking from the foot of this staircase, sent a tremor of apprehension over all the fugitives. The sound of their footsteps caught his ear, and he abruptly demanded in Italian who was passing? "It is I, monsieur," hastily replied Souvré; and making a sign to his companions to proceed towards the door, he boldly descended the steps to intercept and accost the vigilant steward of the household. Alemanni asked what Souvré wanted? He replied, "The key of the postern-door at the foot of the tower, as he had a private errand now that the king his master could dispense with his services." What errand?" persisted Alemanni. "The truth is," replied Souvré, haughtily, "that I have an assignation with a lady whose abode is in the fauxbourg. I pray you, monsieur, therefore, give me the key of the little door without further parley." The tone of Souvré, who was known to possess much power over the mind of the king, made a great impression on Alemanni; who having witnessed the *coucher* of his royal master, believed that this expedition could have no significance, it being a common practice of the lords in Henry's

suite to take their diversion without, after their services were dispensed with. Alemanni, therefore, somewhat reluctantly gave the key of the postern, after putting some indifferent questions relative to the king, all of which were responded to by Souvré with supreme coolness. A lingering suspicion, however, prompted Alemanni to offer to accompany Souvré to open the door. The latter laughed; but bounding up the steps, cleared them before Alemanni, who was old and infirm, had reached the foot of the staircase. Souvré found Henry and his companions in the passage hidden close under the shelter of the wall. He placed the key, and turned it in the lock. The fugitives eagerly passed through the open door, and after securing it again, they made for the country which lay outside the fauxbourg, towards the little ruined chapel of St. Stanislaus.[1]

The night was fine but dark, and after some wanderings Henry safely reached the chapel. Carquereau was waiting for the king with horses; but Pibrac, Villequier, and the other cavaliers had not made their appearance; while Chemerault was also missing. This discovery occasioned the greatest consternation, for the latter had undertaken to provide the necessary guides to conduct the king to the frontier. While Henry and his cavaliers were discussing this adverse incident, a great clatter of horsemen was heard advancing towards their rendezvous. Souvré drew his sword, and threw himself before the king, believing that Alemanni had given the alarm, and that the Poles were in pursuit. The horses stopped near the chapel, and a cavalier advanced and threw himself at Henry's feet. The new comer was Ermenville, one of Henry's gentlemen, who, with two other cavaliers, had discovered the proposed departure of the king; and fearing for their lives when

[1] Successi del Viaggio d' Enrico Terzo, della sua Partita de Cracovia sino all' arrivo in Torino de Niccoli Luggenangeli.—Venetia, 1574.

that event should be discovered, had resolved at any risk to follow their royal master.

"Remount your horses, messieurs," coldly responded Henry. "You have given us great alarm." The peril of waiting for the missing cavaliers was now more imminent than ever. Souvré, therefore, entreated the king to delay his departure no longer, but to trust to God and his fortune for safety. Henry, whose spirit of enterprise was roused by the obstacles he encountered, consented. With the aid of Souvré he mounted a fleet barb, the property of the latter. The horse, however, as soon as the king seized the reins, began to rear and plunge, so that his majesty narrowly escaped from being thrown. As there was no time to wrestle for mastery over the fiery animal, Henry dismounted, and leaping upon the back of a charger which had been presented to him by his Polish chamberlain, the fugitives set forth.

About a hundred yards from the chapel they met four gentlemen of the suite who were to accompany Henry, but still without Pibrac, Villequier, and Chemerault. It was, therefore, conjectured that the latter had been arrested in their attempt to quit Cracow. The darkness of the night and the horrible roads rendered Henry's enterprise full of personal hazard. Not one of the cavaliers knew the way to the frontier; nor had they ever penetrated six miles beyond the gates of Cracow. They none of them could speak the dialect of the country; so upon their bravery and good fortune they had alone to rely to avert a disastrous conclusion of the enterprise. Henry's courage, however, sustained and dissipated their fears. Riding foremost with Souvré, he ridiculed the misgivings of those of his suite who, deeming the adventure hopeless, conjured his majesty to return to his palace; while he himself predicted success, and promised future honours

to the fortunate participants of his flight. The first experiences of the fugitives, nevertheless, were not encouraging; they found themselves wandering from the high road upon a wide and pathless morass, bounded on one side by a pine forest and overrun with bramble-bushes, over which their horses constantly floundered.

At length they came upon three bridle-paths, into the first of which they turned, hoping that it might lead them back to the high-road. Along this path they wandered about the distance of six miles—their horses plunging into marshy pools, sinking into bogs, wading across rivulets, or stumbling over fragments of granite in the darkness which became still more dense as the road led them closer under the shadow of the forest. Further progress was presently arrested by an immense tree which lay across the road, having apparently just been felled. In this perplexity the king dismounted, and an eager conference ensued, the result of which was, that while Henry rested by the tree, the boldest of his cavaliers rode in every direction to find an outlet from this forest pathway. After some reconnoitring, Souvré perceived a glimmering light, which proved to issue from the hut of a charcoal-burner, far down in a distant covert. To ride thither was the act of a few minutes; for on the issue of this discovery seemed to rest the chance of extrication from their perilous predicament. But the noise made by the approach of the horsemen so terrified the wild inmate of the hut, that as Souvré and Larchant drew near they saw him dart up to his loft by a ladder on the outside of the hovel, which he dragged up after him. The cavaliers in vain shouted and knocked, but received no response; their unknown tongue still further scaring the poor wood-cutter. At length, in desperation, they tied their horses to adjacent trees, and commenced a battery of the hovel. Souvré managed to scramble

to the loft, in which he found the charcoal-burner coiled up in a corner on some straw, nearly dead with terror. Together the cavaliers dragged him down; but as they could not make him comprehend a word, Larchant placed him on his horse and bore him to the presence of the king. Henry had fortunately acquired a few sentences of the vernacular dialect, which, by the counsel of his mother, he began to study immediately on his arrival in Poland. When the poor serf heard himself addressed in familiar words his terror abated, and he readily undertook to lead the fugitives from the intricacies of the forest. He tremblingly begged, however, to be permitted to walk; but neither time nor prudence allowed this his request to be granted. Ermenville, therefore, on a sign from Henry, seized their bewildered captive, who thought that he had to deal with diabolical visitants, and placed him on his horse. The charcoal-burner, however, proved a sure and capable guide; and after a fatiguing and perilous ride, the royal fugitive found himself, as day was dawning, before the town of Liszki.[1]

At Liszki it fortunately happened that the barriers of the bridge had been left open. The fugitives, therefore, were enabled to ride through the town without opposition, and continued their route to Oswiecein, a place distant about three French leagues, where the king, to his great satisfaction, found Pibrac, Villequier, Quélus, Beauvais-Nangis, Chemerault, and Bellegarde, who having in the darkness and confusion missed the route fixed for Henry's journey, had, nevertheless, accomplished the same distance as his majesty with far less peril and delay.

[1] Mathieu: Hist. du Règne de Henri III. liv. vii. The historian Mathieu wrote this history of the flight of Henry from Poland at the dictation of Souvré, the king's brave equerry who accompanied his master.—Niccolo Luggenangeli: Viaggio d' Enrico III.

The departure of king Henry was discovered about three hours after he quitted Cracow. The suspicion that his majesty intended a flight haunted the nobles and senators; while a disorderly crowd of rabble kept watch in front of the royal castle and in the adjacent streets, when Henry was ignominously making his escape by the kitchen-postern. The steward of the household, Alemanni, after giving his key to Souvré, was smitten with sundry misgivings, which he presently communicated to the chamberlain Tenczin. These personages, in concert with several other magnates, resolved to allay their suspicions by an instant visit to the chamber of the king, under plea of their solicitude respecting his majesty's repose after the afflicting tidings he had received from France. Tenczin was met on the threshold of the antechamber by M. de Danzay, who, in answer to the queries of the chamberlain, replied, "that the king then slept soundly; but that, not having been able during the first hours of the night to close his eyes, his majesty had very expressly commanded that no one might approach his bed before he himself gave the signal." Tenczin was thereupon compelled to retire. This message, however, was deemed highly unsatisfactory by the magnates, many of whom, on account of the tumultuous gatherings in the streets, had remained in the palace throughout the night. Messengers were sent to the apartments of Pibrac, Villequier, and Souvré, vice-chamberlains to the king; but the doors of their chambers were locked, and no response was made to the summons. Under these circumstances the magnates again deputed Tenczin, Alemanni, and Sborowski palatine of Cracow, to the royal chamber. They were instructed to arouse the king in case he slept; and humbly to pray his majesty to appease the growing excitement by showing himself to the people; who with ardent loyalty mourned the

alleged departure of their king. Armed with this mandate, the Polish nobles returned to the royal chamber, and despite the remonstrances of Danzay, they approached the bed, the curtain of which was drawn back by Tenczin. The truth was instantly apparent—the king had fled! A cry of rage broke from the lips of all present; and the senators retreated, threatening vengeance against "the perjured deserter," who had thus ignominiously broken his coronation oath. When the news of the king's flight was communicated to the assembled magnates, their resentment at being so artfully outwitted was uncontrollable. Their first mandate was to order a guard to be placed over the French of the household, with the view of their future arraignment for abetting the departure of the king; though the indignation felt by these individuals, who were all of them ignorant of Henry's design, was as overwhelming as that of the Polish lords, for having been, as they alleged, so treacherously abandoned. The arrest of Alemanni was next decreed; but this functionary recovered his liberty at the intercession of the princess Anne, whose favoured servant he was. The palatines next proceeded to make a somewhat undignified progress to the king's chamber to take possession of his majesty's valuables, and especially of a coffer of precious jewels, valued at 300,000 crowns, which generally hung suspended from the foot of his bed. M. de Bellièvre on the preceding Monday, however, had relieved the magnates from the onerous charge of preserving this coffer and its dazzling contents; it was, therefore, not to be found. A guard was, nevertheless, placed over the chamber.

The nobles next proceeded to concert the steps to be taken for arresting the flight of the king, who had now obtained, in point of time, an advantage of four hours. It was determined to despatch the chamberlain

Tenczin and Karnkowski, grand-referendary of Poland, with a troop of Tartar cavalry, armed with bows and arrows. Karnkowski, who was advanced in years, travelled in a coach-and-six, which was to serve also to bring back the king. A mob of turbulent burghers, armed with sticks, javelins, and stones, was suffered also to follow in pursuit. These joined Tenczin's escort, shouting and exciting the rabble in the villages through which they passed to aid in capturing the "dastardly French." The senate, moreover, despatched a Cossack, mounted on a fleet horse, to deliver a despatch addressed to the governor of Plesse, the first imperial town on the frontier of Moravia, praying him to arrest the king and his retinue.

The chamberlain Tenczin and his motley *entourage* came in sight of the fugitives at the town of Oswiecein. Some of the gentlemen of the suite, including Pibrac, Villequier, Quélus, and Miron, exhausted with the fatigues of the past night, and deeming themselves comparatively free from danger, had dismounted from their horses, intending to repose for an hour, and then follow his majesty. Henry had peremptorily declined to alight, or to delay his journey until off the Polish territory—a resolution which ultimately saved him from the disgrace of capture. When the approach of the Polish cavalry was descried on the distant plains, the cavaliers leapt into their saddles and prepared to fly for their lives. The fleet horses of the Tartar guard followed in hot pursuit, and every moment brought the cavaliers nearer within the range of their arrows. Miron kept ahead of the troop, and soon came in sight of Henry and his retinue, who were riding leisurely along unconscious of danger. "Piquez! Piquez!" shouted the king's valiant physician, who, panting for breath, still urged his horse onwards. Souvré with characteristic coolness rode back to inquire the cause of Miron's agi-

tation. "All Poland is pursuing his majesty; and the gentlemen who remained behind are dead men or prisoners!" exclaimed Miron. Henry during this brief colloquy, apprehending danger, had put spurs to his horse and was out of sight. Meantime Villequier, Bellegarde, and Beauvais-Nangis overtook Souvré and Miron just before they crossed a rude bridge of planks over the Vistula on the frontier. Pibrac, actuated by some extraordinary panic, having preferred to trust to his legs rather than to the issue of the race, had thrown himself off his horse and plunged into the recesses of a dense forest. As soon as the cavaliers passed the bridge they destroyed it, throwing the planks into the swift river. Just as the last vestige of the bridge was swept away by the stream, a body of cavalry five hundred strong, followed by a howling and disorderly mob of peasants, came up, expecting to cross. As the passage was impossible, Henry's pursuers were compelled to go nine miles lower down the river, to a spot where a ford was practicable—a delay which saved the king, though it proved a casualty, as the sequel will show, which nearly occasioned the death of his majesty's faithful orator and secretary Pibrac.

Having placed the Vistula between themselves and the Polish magnates, the French cavaliers came up with their king as he was entering the imperial town of Plesse in Moravia. Here Henry found Bellièvre, who had been awaiting his royal master. The transport of this faithful servant on beholding the king safe and uninjured was so overpowering that, forgetting the strict *incognito* which Henry had prescribed until all peril of his capture should be passed, Bellièvre advanced to throw himself at his master's feet. Henry hastily prevented this action; but grasping the hand of Bellièvre, he significantly placed his finger on his lips. Bellièvre, then, as had been agreed, publicly reprimanded

the king, to whom he gave the name of the capitaine de la Motte, for his long delay, which he stated had brought prejudice to the affairs of his majesty. This farce, however, was soon abandoned when the governor of Plesse drew Henry aside and showed him the letters which he had just received from the Polish senate, requesting that his majesty might be detained. "I, therefore, most humbly supplicate your majesty to make no delay in this town of Plesse, so that I may neither offend your Christian majesty, nor yet infringe the terms of alliance and mutual interchange of good offices, which subsist between Austria and the realm of Poland."

Henry, as may be imagined, required no second prompting to depart; but mounting a fresh horse belonging to Bellièvre, his own having dropped dead as he passed the gates of Plesse, he resumed his journey.

The comte de Tenczin, meanwhile, and his troop entered Plesse soon after Henry had quitted it. By the counsel of the imperial governor, Tenczin left his soldiers in the town, and continued his pursuit attended only by an escort of five Tartars. The forcible capture of the king would have been an infraction of treaties on the Austrian territory. Henry, therefore, being safe from personal violence, Tenczin agreed to the representations of Maximilian's lieutenant that he was far more likely to induce the king to a voluntary return by approaching his majesty in a humble and submissive attitude. Tenczin therefore departed, and soon came up with Henry about two leagues from the town. As soon as the king and his cavaliers beheld Tenczin and his Cossacks bearing down upon them with their bows poised for conflict, Henry undauntedly reined in his horse; while Bellièvre, seizing two pistols from the holsters of his saddle, presented them to Souvré and Larchant, commanding them to defend his majesty;

then drawing his own sword, he placed himself so as to shield the person of the king. Souvré and Larchant then galloped towards the advancing party, and demanded whether the comte de Tenczin came as friend or foe? "I come as the humble and faithful servant of my king," responded the count. "Good, my lord!" replied Souvré; "then command your people to lower their bows, or you will be the first to repent it!" This order being complied with, Tenczin rode forwards with Souvré to the spot where Henry waited. Tenczin made a gesture expressive of his desire to address the king on his knees; but Henry commanded him to speak from his saddle, and to state his errand briefly. "Sire," rejoined the chamberlain, "I have been deputed by the senate to express to your majesty the incredible regret which they feel at your unexpected departure. The senators have commanded me to ask your gracious pardon for not having recognized as they ought to have done the signal grace which God bestowed upon them in giving them a prince such as your majesty. They conjure your majesty most humbly, by the tears and aspirations of all orders of your subjects, to return to Cracow, promising you for the future implicit obedience and a reverence and honour which your majesty will not find surpassed in any portion of your dominions." To this address Henry replied: "Count, my friend and chamberlain, in taking possession of the kingdom which God has given me by right of heritage, I abandon not the realm which is mine by election. May He give me grace to preserve both the one and the other in peace and concord! France, nevertheless, has the first claim to my aspirations; she demands from me the service which by birth I owe her, in this her hour of peril. I will see you again. God be praised, I have strength to bear the burden of both realms!" The count then proceeded to expostulate on

the indignity which the stolen departure of his majesty inflicted upon Poland in return for her enthusiastic election. Souvré and Bellièvre, however, suspecting that the discourse of Tenczin was prolonged only to give time to the Polish cavalry to surround his majesty, advised the king to proceed. "M. le comte," rejoined the king with severity, "I shall not return. I am too far advanced on my journey to turn back, even if all the forces of Poland were at your command. I will plunge my dagger in the heart of any man bold enough again to propose such a thing. You can render me no service except to turn back again with all your troop, and to protect my servants whom I have been obliged to leave behind in Cracow." Tenczin then vowed fidelity to the interests of the king. Baring his arm, he drew blood therefrom with his dagger, and then applied his lips to the wound in pledge of fealty. He then entreated the king to give him an epaulette in token of pardon and favour; and to receive from him in exchange an armlet of rare cameos, which the chamberlain unclasped and presented. Henry, touched by this unexpected mark of loyal fervour, drew a diamond from his finger valued at twelve hundred crowns, and gave it to the count. Souvré next cordially embraced the chamberlain, with whom during his residence in Cracow he had been intimate; and requested himto accept a rich suit of armour inlaid with gold, which was kept in his apartment at the palace.[1] The king, now happily relieved from peril at the hands of his indignant lieges of Poland, continued his journey, despatching Larchant on to Vienna to notify his approaching arrival to the emperor Maximilian II.

The flight of Pibrac into the wood, meanwhile, had

[1] Mathieu: Hist. du Règne de Henri III. liv. vii. Hist. de France. De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii. Niccolo Luggenangeli: Viaggio d' Enrico III.

been observed by several peasants, who immediately gave chase. Their loud halloos raised the neighbouring hamlets, and the peasants rushed from their hovels, armed with forks, pikes, and sticks, and joined in the pursuit. Pibrac, meanwhile, plunged deeper into the recesses of the forest, which afforded an indifferent covert, as the foliage was not yet fully expanded. His savage pursuers followed, beating the thickets, plunging their pikes into bushes, and causing the forest to ring with discordant shouts and merriment. After an interval Pibrac's persecutors were reinforced by a portion of the mob of peasants which followed Tenczin and his troop. Fatigued with their chase after the king—their ardour being damped by the destruction of the wooden bridge over the Vistula and their consequent retreat—a considerable number stayed behind to join in the hunt after Pibrac, especially as it was rumoured that the king was also hidden in the forest. Escape from the vengeance of this infuriated band seemed hopeless. Pibrac, in despair, on hearing the cry of his tormentors approaching the spot where he lay sheltered by a thicket of thorn-bushes, rose and made for a swamp which he perceived at a little distance. Plunged up to his neck in water, he there hid himself beneath some overhanging branches, and sheltered by a screen of tall reeds and bulrushes, he succeeded in eluding observation. The boors, however, suspecting that Pibrac had taken to the swamp, and descrying the trace of his passage on its weedy surface, formed a cordon round it and celebrated their supposed victory by exultant shouts. As a pastime the peasants began to hurl implements of all descriptions, stones, javelins, arrows, and poles, into the meer. The unfortunate Pibrac, meanwhile immersed up to the chin, was often compelled to plunge his head into the slimy waters to escape the stroke of the missiles falling around.

In this position Pibrac remained for upwards of fifteen hours, when darkness closing in, the boors, believing that human endurance must long ago have succumbed, concluded that they had mistaken the hiding-place of their intended victim, and gradually dispersed. Pibrac then emerged from the swamp, faint from its nauseous effluvia and from want of food. His boots stuck fast in the mud at the bottom of the swamp; also the lower part of his *haut-de-chausses* was torn to shreds by the brambles. In this deplorable plight Pibrac found himself at night in the heart of a vast forest, exposed to countless dangers from the attacks of wild beasts, in perils of pitfalls and morasses similar to the one from which he had just struggled, and famishing with hunger. "Bare-headed, his feet and legs naked to the knee, this illustrious orator found himself exposed to inexpressible perils," says the biographer of Pibrac.[1] He at length took courage, and continued his progress amid thorns and brambles, passing mysterious and horrible abysses, wandering in the silence of the night and guided alone by the feeble light of the stars of heaven towards the west, in which direction Pibrac remembered lay his beloved France." At dawn Pibrac came to the banks of a wide river; it was the Vistula, the boundary between the Polish and the Austrian frontier. Pibrac wandered for some time on the margin of the river searching for a ford; none, however, could he descry; the smooth, shining current lay before him unbroken, and to his eye fathomless. In this extremity Pibrac determined, at any risk, though he could not swim, to attempt the passage across; for as the sun rose he feared that his persecutors would be again on his track. Pibrac then knelt on the margin of the river, and clasping his hands, implored the help of Heaven. He next broke a large branch from a tree growing near at hand, and

[1] Pascal: Vie de Guy de Faur, Seigneur de Pibrac.

holding it firmly, he plunged fearlessly into the stream. The water rose to his chin; while the pebbles at the bottom of the river, being covered with moss, rendered his footing insecure. Twice Pibrac stumbled and fell into the torrent; "but at length, by the mercy of Heaven, he was enabled to twine his arm so firmly through the branch he had provided, that it served as a support, and helped to deposit him, after many failures, faint and exhausted on the opposite bank."

Pibrac rested until the sun had risen in splendour, when, somewhat cheered by its warmth, he proceeded on his painful progress. After walking for two hours over a plain without vestige of habitation, Pibrac descried a cabin, which he presently entered. He was greeted with shouts of laughter by its inmates, rude cowherds, who mocked his wretched plight and jaded appearance. Presently it occurred to these people that the suppliant, whose language they could not understand, must be one of the French refugees, the news of whose evasion had raised the district. Accordingly they began to torment their helpless victim with blows; and were even preparing to cut off his nose, when an aged crone hobbled from an inner chamber and delivered Pibrac from their barbarous assaults. The woman conducted Pibrac to a loft, and making him lie down on some straw, she charitably bathed his wounds and brought him a loaf of rye-bread and a can of black beer. Never had the choicest wines quaffed at the banquets in the Louvre appeared more delicious than did this sour beverage to the parched and suffering Pibrac. After having satiated his hunger and thirst, Pibrac lay down to sleep, his kind protectress promising by signs to defend him from danger during his repose. So profound was Pibrac's sleep, that it lasted during the whole day. About midnight he awoke, and from the sounds of heavy slumber which ascended from the lower

compartment of the hovel, he judged that the old woman and her sons were asleep. Not a moment, therefore, was to be lost: Pibrac lowered himself by his hands from his loft, the door of which opened on the outside of the cabin, and was soon wandering again by star-light in the open fields. Towards morning Pibrac found himself traversing a barren heath, across which, however, to his intense delight, he descried the high road. Wearily he was pursuing his way, when he heard the sound of horses galloping and a noise of wheels. Along the high road a coach drawn by six horses passed, followed by another coach and a numerous escort of horsemen. It was the grand-referendary Stanislaus Karnkowski returning from his bootless progress to escort the king back to Cracow. "Pibrac," says his biographer, "almost screamed and shouted for joy when he beheld the cortège, although divining that it consisted of enemies who only sought to avenge his evasion." He waved his hand and ran at full speed towards the spot where Karnkowski waited wondering who the fugitive could be. The referendary had been one of Pibrac's most intimate friends, and he was moved with compassion when he beheld the alteration which peril and mental suffering had wrought on the appearance of the once gay and gallant cavalier. He made Pibrac sit by him in his coach, and caused cordials to be administered. When the latter was somewhat revived, Karnkowski informed him of the safe evasion of his majesty. Henry's loyal secretary, exhausted as he was, yet found strength to exclaim, Vive le roi! then addressing the referendary, he demanded, in the name of the king, that a coach and escort should forthwith be placed at his disposal to rejoin his royal master at Vienna. A great consultation then ensued, in which the magnates who accompanied Karnkowski insisted

that Pibrac should be conveyed back to Cracow as a prisoner to suffer arraignment for having "induced his majesty to leave Poland without taking leave of the senate, his said majesty having, therefore, sullied his reputation, and endangered the tranquillity of the realm." Pibrac calmly replied, "that the king would know how to punish his oppressors, and would avenge injury done to the least of the servants whom his majesty, to his very great regret, had been compelled to leave behind in Cracow. He wished also to notify to the palatines present that the king had written to his mother, queen Catherine, to cause all Polish subjects found in France to be arrested or placed under *surveillance*, that their lives might answer for the safety of his subjects in Poland." After some additional conference, the magnates present determined no longer to oppose Pibrac's departure, especially after Karnkowski had observed, "that his majesty was not now alone their own elect king, but the hereditary ruler of the most potent state of Christendom." Imitating, therefore, the example of the comte de Tenczin when in the presence of the king, the ire of the magnates evaporated; and as Henry was now fairly beyond their power, prudence dictated that it was as well not to incur his wrath. They, therefore, dismissed M. de Pibrac with many affectionate messages of attachment and fidelity to king Henry; while Karnkowski generously presented Pibrac with the coach in which he was riding, and supplied him with money to continue his journey to Vienna.[1]

King Henry during this interval had safely arrived in Vienna, where the emperor Maximilian gave him the most sumptuous welcome. The archdukes Matthias and Maximilian departed at an hour's notice to receive the king immediately after the arrival of Chemerault;

[1] De Thou. Mathieu. Pascal: Vie de Pibrac. Mezeray. Faits notables de Henri de Valois.

while the emperor himself followed with a train of sixty coaches, conveying the principal nobles of the Austrian court. Henry was received by the empress Marie[1] in person at the portal of the palace in Vienna. Henry here found letters from the queen-regent awaiting him; also a seasonable supply of money to the amount of 50,000 crowns, which Cheverny had forwarded for his master's use. A similar sum was likewise deposited at the command of the king in the towns of Augsburg and Venice.[2] Never could monarch have been more energetically and effectually served than was Henry at this period by Cheverny and the queen his mother. Everything had been prepared by their devotion to ensure his triumphant return to France. Not a single casualty happened but what had been provided for by Catherine; and the right men filled the foreign embassies to serve the king by their ability and address, or to adorn the circle of his court. The incomparable manner of Henry, meanwhile, accomplished its usual effect at the court of Vienna—every one was fascinated; and his majesty of demeanour and accomplishments were themes upon which all dilated with enthusiasm. The good and benevolent Maximilian tendered some admirable counsel to his guest. He besought Henry to grant a general amnesty to his subjects of France. He implored him to conciliate the Huguenots of his realm, and to live in brotherly unity with the duc d'Alençon; to release the prisoners; to annul all processes; and to make a pacific entry into France—"by this means, sire, your future will be glorious and brilliant, as are now your present pro-

[1] Sister of Philip II. king of Spain, and mother of Elizabeth queen of France, consort of Charles IX. MS. Bibl. Imp. Fontanieu, Portef. 335-6. MS. Lettre du Cardinal d'Esté à Madame la Duchesse de Ferrare sa mère: Béth. vol. cotté 8745, fol. 40.

[2] Mém. du Chancélier de Cheverny.

spects."[1] On the subject of Poland, also, the emperor tendered his advice. He prayed the king not to resent the hardy and imperious manner in which the magnates had demonstrated their regrets and loyalty. At Maximilian's desire, Henry addressed amicable letters to the Polish diet, reiterating the commands he had caused to be communicated to the senate by Danzay, that deputies might be despatched to confer with him. Pibrac soon after rejoined his royal master, by whom he was received with extraordinary demonstrations of cordiality; and such was his favour, that Maximilian selected him as the medium of communicating to the king of France his desire, that a close family alliance should unite them by the espousals of the king with the widow of his brother Charles IX., who was the youngest daughter of the emperor.[2] This confidence was the most signal honour which Pibrac received in return for the pains and perils incurred on his master's behalf. The proposition of espousing his brother's widow was, of course, highly distasteful to Henry; who, however, not deeming it politic to offend his imperial host, appeared to participate heartily in the project, and promised that it should be laid before the privy council on his return to France.

The king quitted Vienna on the first day of July, 1574, and traversing the Tyrol, he arrived on the frontier of Friuli on the 11th of the same month. He

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii. Tommasio: Relations des Ambassadeurs Vénitiens sur les Affaires de France au Seizième Siècle. Relazione del clarissimo Giovanni Michel, dell' ano 1575. "La reine-mère," says Michel, "conseilla au roy le contraire; elle lui dit qu'il falloit entrer (en France) entouré de troupes, de façon à être non seulement respecté, mais craint, afin que lorsqu'il s'agirait de relâcher les prisonniers, et de pardonner à tous, il n'eut pas l'air de le faire lâchement, non par générosité, mais par peur: bon conseil, si le roi l'eut suivi."

[2] Brantôme. Mezeray.

was received by Jerome Moçenigo, brother of the doge of Venice and governor of the province, at the head of a band of five hundred gentlemen. Deputies from the Venetian senate here greeted the king, whose office it was to escort Henry to Venice.

Attended by this suite of nobles, Henry arrived at Murano on the 16th of July. His majesty's retinue had been further augmented by the presence of the duke of Ferrara and the duc de Nevers, who on his return from Poland had been compelled by sickness to remain at Padua. At Murano, Henry was complimented by the cardinal Buonocompagno, nephew and legate-extraordinary from his holiness Gregory XIII. After this reception, a most sumptuous ceremonial ensued, such as was rarely witnessed even in those days of royal pageantries. The doge of Venice, Moçenigo, at the head of the senate, came in procession to salute his majesty, and to conduct Henry to the palace prepared for him. The Adriatic was covered with gaily adorned vessels, and over all the flag of France floated with the standard of the republic. The doge and the Council of Ten sailed in the famous state barge called the 'Bucentaur,' which was magnificently draped with cloth of cold and blue damask for the reception of king Henry. Forty gondolas, having awnings and pavilions of black taffeta, were prepared for the gentlemen of the king's suite. There were, besides, two hundred gondolas splendidly adorned, and filled with ladies. Henry stepped on board the 'Bucentaur' amid the firing of a royal salute from the forts of Venice, and proceeded to the palazzo Foscarini. On landing, the king was received by one hundred cavaliers, chosen from the first Venetian families, whose office it was to attend upon his majesty and to follow him wherever he went during his residence in Venice.

The arrival of the dukes of Savoy and of Mantua

again augmented Henry's train. These princes presented themselves in time to preside with Henry in the senate at an election of members; at which ceremony the doge ceded the place of honour to the king. Henry gave his suffrage to Jacques Contarini, who had long aspired to the dignity of one of the *pregadi*. The senators unanimously followed the example of his majesty. Contarini being introduced, thanked Henry for the honour conferred upon him. "No, monseigneur," replied Henry, with infinite tact, "you owe me no exclusive gratitude. Your new dignity is the gift of the united senate, which thus testifies its sense of your extraordinary merit."[1]

The sight, however, which seemed to confer most gratification on the king was the arsenal. Henry spent one whole day within its precincts, examining everything and asking pertinent questions respecting the fabrication of arms, the casting of cannon, and the construction of the famous galleys of the republic. A galley of the first class, fully equipped with cannon and rigging, was put together in the presence of Henry, the various divisions of the vessel having previously been prepared and numbered. The king had the gratification of returning on board this galley, which fired gallant salutes as she passed down the grand canal to the palazzo Foscarini. The fêtes and banquets which were given by the Venetians in honour of their illustrious guest were numerous and splendid. The doge entertained the king with a ballet of the voluptuous description which Catherine de Medici had rendered popular. Two hundred noble Venetian ladies, arrayed in robes of white gauze looped with diamonds, danced in this ballet with such ravishing grace as to elicit rapturous admiration from the king.[2] "After nine

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lvii.
[2] Mezeray: Grande Histoire.

days of enchantment," as the king termed his sojourn in Venice, on the 27th day of July Henry bade farewell to the hospitable seignory. On taking leave of the king, the doge Moçenigo respectfully tendered as his advice that Henry, on arriving in France, should conciliate his subjects by the publication of a general amnesty. The doge also presented to the king, in the name of the republic, the original statutes of the Neapolitan order of the St. Esprit, which Louis d'Anjou, king of Naples and Sicily, had instituted as a reward and badge of valour and piety. This gift was very agreeable to the king; and subsequently, on the model of these statutes, he moulded his own order of the St. Esprit.

From Venice Henry proceeded to Padua, and from thence he travelled to Ferrara,[1] escorted with the greatest pomp by the dukes of Savoy, Ferrara, and Mantua. While the king sojourned at Ferrara, don Juan of Austria, governor of the Milanese, deputed personages to invite Henry to visit Milan in the name of the king of Spain; an offer which was declined by his majesty. Henry continued his progress by water to Mantua, sailing in a splendidly decorated barge provided by the duke of Ferrara. The slow and luxurious progress of the king through the Italian states received an impetus at Mantua from despatches which he received from Catherine. The queen contemplated with amazement her son's dilatory advance to take possession of that crown which she regarded as the most priceless of acquisitions. In language able and concise Catherine urged the king to hasten his journey; and while exulting in the success of her policy, she explained the reasons which rendered his presence indispensable.

The exhortations of his mother were implicitly regarded by Henry; her devotion and watchfulness he

[1] Lettre du Roi au Duc de Nemours, MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth. 8845, fol. i. datée le huitième jour de Juillet, de Ferrare.

often at this period publicly declared could never be sufficiently acknowledged or requited. He therefore suddenly took leave of the duke of Mantua, and without waiting for any ceremonial farewell, departed for Turin. Henry there found awaiting him two secretaries of state, despatched by the queen with ample instructions. The king arrived at Turin on the 24th of August, 1574, the second anniversary of the massacre of Paris; from which period the regal sway of Henry III. may be said to commence.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

1574.

Trial and execution of Montgomery—Government of the queen—Obsequies of Charles IX.—Assembly of Millaud—Its results—Henry III. at Turin—His first regal acts—The maréchal Damville—Instructions sent by the queen to her son by Chevernÿ—The duchess of Savoy—Rewards bestowed by the king—Cession of Piedmont—The house of Gondy—Magnificent progress of Henry III.—His arrival at the bridge of Beauvoisin—Received by the duc d'Alençon and the king of Navarre—Arrival of the king at Bourgoing—Meeting between Catherine and Henry III—Details—Entry of the king into Lyons—National rejoicings—Council of state—Resolution taken to continue the war—Missions of MM. de Bellegarde and Pibrac—Decease of the duchess of Savoy—Occupations of the king—Madame de Sauve—Rivalry between Monsieur and the king of Navarre—Queen Marguerite—Henry's hostility—The princesse de Condé—Her decease—Extravagant despair of the king—Court mourning—Departure of the court of France for Avignon—The duchesse de Montmorency—Accident at Pont St. Esprit—Letter of the queen to the maréchal de Montmorency—Jealousies of the court—Matrimonial alliance proposed to the king—Marie de Lorraine—Proposed marriage of king Henry with Elizabeth Wasa—Embassy of Pinart to Stockholm—The fraternity of Flagellants—Their order is joined by the king—The cardinal de Lorraine—His illness and death—His character—Terrors of the queen at the alleged supernatural appearances of the deceased prelate—'Discours Merveilleux.'

Catherine de Medici during this interval continued ably to administer the affairs of the realm of France, according to her notions of the royal prerogative and the ascendency which she was personally resolved to maintain.

The queen and the princes arrived in Paris from

Vincennes on Tuesday, June 1st. The three following days were employed by Catherine in devising precautions for the safe custody of her son François and the king of Navarre; and in ordering the pageant of the deceased king's funeral obsequies and his lying-in-state. On Saturday a privy council was holden by the queen in her palace of the Tuileries, at which Catherine caused a commission to be issued for the trial of Montgomery. Nothing could surpass the exultation which Catherine had demonstrated when informed of the siege of Domfront by Matignon, and that her capital enemy Montgomery was therefore almost within her toils. With the greatest energy the queen despatched succours of men and money to the marshal. With her own hand she wrote letters to the nobles of the adjacent district in Normandy, calling upon them to aid the king's general in subduing so malignant a rebel, the abettor of Coligny and the hireling of Elizabeth of England. The fatal joust of the rue St. Antoine, where Catherine had presided in the pride of queenly state and which she quitted widowed by the hand of Montgomery, had never been pardoned by the queen. She remembered the troubles that ensued on the decease of Francis II., and which had embittered her enjoyment of power; the subsequent civil wars; the siege of Rouen; the acceptance by Montgomery of the office of lieutenant-general for the queen of Navarre; his conquest of Béarn; the death of the royal general Terride, and the execution done on the revolted barons, subjects of Jeanne d'Albret—all these causes aroused in the breast of the queen a hate which the blood of Montgomery alone could allay.[1] Accordingly before the decease of Charles IX. orders were forwarded by the queen to Matignon to effect the capture of Montgomery at any risk; her majesty promising to accept

[1] Life of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, tome ii.

the responsibility of the blood shed before Domfront; or of the infraction of the articles of capitulation whereby Montgomery might have been induced to surrender. The siege continued for some weeks. Montgomery at length, unable to oppose the accumulated ills of famine, desertion, and treachery, gave ear in an evil hour to the solicitations of his relative the sieur de Vassé, an officer of the royal army, and offered to capitulate, provided his life and liberty were guaranteed. Matignon accepted the terms; but when Montgomery had surrendered he found himself a close prisoner, and despite his protests, in a few days on his road to Paris.[1] He was first confined in a chamber of the Palais, where Catherine sent the chancellor Birague to interrogate the count, as he had intimated that he wished to make some revelation. When informed, however, of the decease of Charles IX., Montgomery coldly declined to make any statement whatever. Birague then joined the council at the Tuileries, when the warrant was signed for the committal of Montgomery to the square tower of the Conciergerie, on the immediate charge of having treasonably appeared in arms against the king; and for having hoisted the English flag at La Rochelle and Domfront. The judges appointed to try Montgomery were Vialard, first president of the parliament of Rouen, and Poisle, one of the judges of the parliament of Paris. His interrogatory was not alone confined to the charges for which he was then arraigned, but comprehended the incidents connected with every political movement in which Montgomery had joined from the decease of Francis II. The demeanour of the count was worthy of his reputation as a hero, the friend of Jeanne d'Albret and Coligny. Nothing, however, could be elicited from him: faithful to the last, Montgomery criminated none of his associates in

[1] Journal de Henri III.: De Thou, liv. lviii.

faith or in arms, while steadily refusing to reveal the nature of his conferences with the English council; or the extent of the aid afforded during the recent contests by queen Elizabeth. To vanquish his constancy and to wrest avowals against Coligny which might vindicate the part that Henry III. had taken in the massacre of Paris, Montgomery, by command of the queen, was subjected to torture. But the rack failed to elicit aught but plaints at the cruel treachery of his enemies, and regrets for the momentary weakness which had induced him to surrender, rather than perish by a glorious death in the assault.[1] On the 25th day of June sentence of death and degradation was pronounced. The attainder extended to all persons remotely allied to Montgomery by blood. As the sentence was to be carried into effect on the following day, Catherine sent Vigor, archbishop of Narbonne, to administer the last consolations of religion to the unhappy prisoner. Montgomery gently but resolutely repulsed his ministration, and declared his adherence to the pure doctrines of the reformed churches—"For these, monseigneur, I have fought, and for these I die!" The following day, Saturday, June 26th, the count was borne from his prison and drawn on a hurdle to the place of execution. His countenance denoted the greatest serenity; and though all his limbs were broken by the severity of the torture to which he had been subjected, no murmur of pain or impatience escaped his lips. The scaffold was erected in the Place de Grève, opposite the windows of the Hôtel de Ville. According to the barbarous custom of the age, the queen, accompanied by the king and queen of Navarre and by the duc d'Alençon, witnessed the execution, her majesty being seated at a window of the Hôtel de Ville, before which was drawn a blind

[1] La Prinse du Comte de Montgommery dedans le Château de Domfront, Jeudi, 27 Mai, 1574: Archives Curieuses, tome viii. 1 série.

of fine gauze. Montgomery, when on the scaffold, begged the prayers of the spectators. He recited the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and then submitted himself to the executioner. His head fell at the first blow.[1] The populace cheered as they beheld the blood of the arch-heretic stream forth on the scaffold; while with loud applause the multitudes followed the queen's chariot, and escorted her back in triumph to the Louvre. The Parisians were amongst the most enthusiastic of Catherine's adherents. Her deeds were generally approved in the capital; while the queen, who knew her power, frequently availed herself of this popularity to carry measures which elsewhere she must have relinquished. "The comte de Montgomery had his head severed last Saturday for his great crimes and misdemeanours," wrote queen Catherine to Fénélon, the French ambassador at the English court; "this sentence was the unanimous judgment of the high court of parliament. For myself, I would willingly have deferred his trial and execution until the arrival of the king my son; but we did not dare to delay, fearing a public tumult, the people being so animated against him (Montgomery) for all the evil he has been the cause of, and recently for the great misfortunes which have befallen the people of Normandy through him."[2]

The duc d'Alençon and the king of Navarre were still subjected to rigorous *surveillance*. The former indignantly resented his mother's demeanour, though compelled to an outward acquiescence in all exacted from him. In private Catherine admonished her son that the least indecision, or appearance of veering to-

[1] Discours de la Mort et Exécution de Gabriel comte de Montgommery, le 26 de Juin, 1574: Archives Curieuses, tome viii. De Thou, liv. lviii.

[2] Lettre de Catherine Medici à M. de la Mothe: MSS. de St. Germain, Bibl. Imp.

wards the faction of the Montmorencies, would be punished by incarceration in the Bastille. The English ambassador, meanwhile, requested audience of the queen on a mission from his royal mistress, and proceeded by special favour to confer with Catherine before any other of the ambassadors, about a week after her arrival in Paris. The purport of his visit was to pray the queen-regent, in the name of Elizabeth, not to degrade the princes by rigorous *espionage*, for that it greatly rejoiced the enemies of the royal family to witness such discord; while it gave sincere pain to the English queen to hear of the humiliation of M. d'Alençon especially, who was proposed to her for a husband. Catherine blandly thanked the ambassador for the candour of his communication. "I pray you, M. l'ambassadeur, to thank the queen of England, and to assure her that, so far from feeling themselves humiliated, my sons the duc d'Alençon and the king of Navarre are very content with me, as I am with them, they having made most ample declaration of their loyalty and fidelity to the king their brother."[1] Another day the queen contrived that the princes should be in her chamber at the time Leyton paid her a visit. They there took the opportunity of protesting before the ambassador their devotion to the will of the regent; the duc d'Alençon stating that he would never rebel against the king his brother, and the king of Navarre exclaiming, "Never has there been a traitor of the blood of Albret; send not longer, therefore, your English emissaries, M. l'ambassadeur, to tempt us!"[2] Leyton took these declarations for what they were worth, being made in the presence, and probably by the dictation, of the regent. Catherine's next precaution was to forbid any French subject to leave the realm of France without a special permit from the government,

[1] Dépêche 113. MSS. de St. Germain, Bibl. Imp.
[2] Ibid. Dépêche 116.

until the arrival of the king. "I have forbidden any subject of my lord and son the king to quit the realm without my permission until this crisis be past and the destination of the fleets fitting in the harbours of England and Spain is made clear," complacently observes Catherine.[1]

Hostilities, meanwhile, continued in the provinces. The fall of Domfront had been followed by that of St. Lo, Carenton, and various other places in Normandy. In Poitou the Huguenots made a successful stand against the army under Biron. In Dauphiny the prince-dauphin, son of the duc de Montpensier, was defeated with severe loss before Royau, by the Huguenot chieftain Montbrun. The prince retrieved this reverse by the capture of several small towns, and by the slaughter of their garrisons; but again met with repulse before Livron, the siege of which place he was compelled ignominiously to raise. In Languedoc the most dire discord prevailed. The marshal Damville steadily disregarded the mandate sent by the regent decreeing the resignation of his command to the duc d'Usez and to the comte de Joyeuse. The queen, therefore, despatched the secretary of state Villeroy and the marquis de St. Sulpice to arrest the marshal; or, should that design prove impossible, to obtain against him a ban of the parliament of Toulouse for treason. This portion of her majesty's behest was obeyed; for when Damville, as governor of Languedoc, issued summonses for the states to meet during the ensuing month of July at Montpellier, the parliament of Toulouse prohibited

[1] When a deputation of prelates waited upon Catherine to congratulate her majesty on the accession of the king her son, they asked to be informed what were the last words spoken by the deceased king. "Messeigneurs," maliciously responded the queen, "his late majesty very earnestly enjoined that you should reside within your dioceses;" a response which gave much displeasure to the bishops of the realm.

the assembly in the king's name. All the members of the powerful house of Montmorency were now disgraced and exiled. The maréchal de Montmorency lay a prisoner in the Bastille, being with his companion in misfortune Cossé treated with such rigour, that when the latter was confined to his bed with a dangerous attack of gout, it was necessary to obtain a warrant from the queen sanctioning the admission of a surgeon to the cell. M. de Thoré had fled the realm for his participation in the Enterprise of St. Germain. Méru, the accomplished courtier, and third son of the constable Anne de Montmorency, found refuge at the court of England. Damville, therefore, when he discovered that a warrant for his own arrest had been signed, determined no longer to keep measures with a court so hostile; and forthwith from his refuge at Narbonne made direct overtures to la Noue the great Huguenot chieftain.

The failure of her project against Damville, and the reverses of the royal arms, determined Catherine to conclude a short armistice of two months with la Noue and the Protestants of the realm; and during this interval to grant license to the chieftains of the reformed party to meet at Millaud as they petitioned, to concert articles to serve as the basis of a peace to be presented to the king on his arrival. The truce was, therefore, proposed and negotiated by Biron, and signed on the 23rd day of June at Théri, a place in the vicinity of La Rochelle.[1] The exigencies of the kingdom compelled the queen to make this concession; nevertheless, her plausible words completely deceived the brave la Noue; so that, confiding in Catherine's professions, he believed that she had then nothing more at heart than the negotiation of a lasting peace with the Huguenots. Catherine never trusted again those whom she had injured. The dark abyss of St. Bartholomew's-day yawned between her and the

[1] De Thou, liv. lviii..

Calvinists of the realm, and she was too wily to place her foot on any bridge of their construction.

Two parties now dominated, as of yore, in the French cabinet—Guise, Morvilliers, Cheverny, and Birague heading the Catholic faction; while Paul de Foix and the partisans of the house of Montmorency, the president de Thou, the duc d'Alençon, and others sided with the political principles of the Huguenots, though they professed to be hostile to the religious creed of the latter. Many considerations at this period induced the queen to avow herself as stanch a Roman Catholic as previously she had exhibited indifference and vacillation. In the first place, the king her son was regarded as the champion of orthodoxy, and Catherine intended to rule in his name. Secondly, the prevalence of leagues, revolts, and consequently of negotiations, invested the queen with importance as a mediator between her children and their opponents; an office which no personage of inferior distinction or authority might fulfil. Thirdly, Catherine believed that the proscription of Paris had irritated the Huguenots to the highest pitch of exasperation: it was also her conviction that the massacre would never beforgiven; and that if by any chance their faction obtained a pre-eminent influence in the state, her exile or complete deposition from share in the government would ensue. Moreover, a vista of unlimited power was rising before the eyes of Catherine. Her son the king loved and revered her; while he paid equal deference to her rare administrative powers, and to her personal fascinations. The duc de Guise at this juncture purposely played a subordinate part in public affairs. The odium which the death of Coligny had elicited, and which needed only the faintest indication of royal sanction to affix itself on the princes of Lorraine, was yet afloat on the political atmosphere. In former days the queen's temporary support of the re-

formed party had been but a device against the overweening assumptions of the Guises, and their menaced appropriation of the royal power. Such contingency at the commencement of the reign of Henry III. no longer existed. The duc de Guise was submissive in his deportment; apparently he now aspired only to a legitimate share of influence; and had, to all outward appearance, abandoned the support of the league negotiated at Peronne in 1558 by his father and uncle with Philip II. The cardinal de Lorraine was old; and he whose subtlety and fiery oratory had stirred every Catholic court of Europe, and had more than once paralyzed the queen's own designs, now subscribed himself Catherine's humble servant. The queen next surveyed the Huguenot party: Coligny, Jeanne d'Albret, Montgomery, Montamar, and a host of illustrious chieftains were no more, and la Noue alone of that galaxy of heroes survived. As yet Catherine beheld nothing to apprehend in the character of her son-in-law Henri de Navarre.[1] Enslaved by the charms of madame de Sauve, and dazzled by the talents of his beautiful wife, whom, however, Henri did not love, the queen concluded that the lion of Bourbon slumbered. Condé, impetuous, morose, and soured by mortification, was in truth to be dreaded; only, however, during his sojourn at the court of the elector at Heidelberg, but not as a warrior. The Montmorenci the queen had skilfully circumvented; for one of Catherine's maxims was never to permit the possibility of a fresh assault to him whom you distrust. The duc d'Alençon

[1] The Venetian ambassador Michel gives a description of Henri's personal and mental qualities at this period. He says, "the king of Navarre is not of tall stature, though he is compactly made. His hair is black, but he has as yet no beard. His mind is sprightly and vigorous like that of his mother. He is agreeable, affable, amiable, and, it is said, liberal. He is passionately fond of hunting, and spends all his time in the chase. The duc de Guise has become surety for him that he shall not leave the court."—Relazione de Michel, anno 1574.

the queen considered a prince of character weak, unstable, and effeminate. Monsieur being easily dazzled by the phantom of sovereign power, Catherine calculated to rule her younger son by visions more or less vivid and real of the future possession of the sceptre of England, Poland, or of that of the revolted provinces of the Low Countries. The result of Catherine's survey of the power and means of the Huguenot and orthodox parties of the realm therefore ended in the conviction that though the elements of civil discord were partially extinct, such strifes as still lingered were to be tenderly fostered—as contributing to the stability of her position and to the increase of her power as the arbiter between the king and the disaffected of his realm.

During these, Catherine's busy combinations, a mournful ceremony was proceeding at Vincennes round the mortal remains of the deceased king. The pageant of the lying-in-state surpassed in magnificence all former ceremonials, with the exception of the honours rendered after death to the memory of Francis I. During thirty days the effigy of the king, arrayed in the royal mantle and surrounded by the symbols of sovereignty, was exposed to the gaze of the public on a magnificent couch of parade. In the chamber were the greater number of the officers of his household, who served the royal repasts three times a day with the same regularity and *entourage* as during the life of Charles. A temporary *chapelle ardente* was then prepared; the walls were draped with black velvet, and in the centre of the apartment rose a sumptuous *lit-de-parade* adorned by armorial bearings, beneath which reposed the coffin of the king covered with a pall of velvet. On the 8th of July the body was removed from Vincennes and conveyed to Paris, where it was deposited in the church of St. Antoine des Champs. On the 10th the remains of the king were transferred to Notre Dame, and laid on a

superb *catafalque* reared in front of the high altar. The procession from St. Antoine to Notre Dame was one of extraordinary splendour, the duc d'Alençon and the king of Navarre officiating as chief mourners. The queen had a natural inclination for pompous ceremonial; moreover, she was resolved that the same reproach should not be again cast at her for parsimonious expenditure, as that which echoed throughout Europe after the obsequies of Francis II. On the 12th of July the funeral procession traversed Paris on its road to St. Dénis. The mass was there said by the cardinal de Lorraine, assisted by Ste. Foy, bishop of Nevers elect, and chaplain to the deceased king, who afterwards pronounced the funeral oration. The sermon concluded, the cardinal de Lorraine, attended by a train of prelates, approached the mouth of the tomb opened in the magnificent Chapelle des Valois. The coffin had been, meanwhile, lowered to a depth of one foot into the vault for the concluding ceremonial. The last notes of the requiem died away, when the silence which reigned throughout the vast church was broken by the loud summons of the principal king-at-arms: "Heralds, perform your office." The heralds thereupon broke their wands and cast the fragments into the tomb, and deposited their tabards on the coffin. "The banner of the Swiss guard!" The ensign of the regiment advanced and laid the flag on the bier. The spurs, gauntlets, helmet, shield, and mantle of the deceased king were next brought by his equerries, and deposited in the vault. The regalia were afterwards lowered on the coffin; finally, over all, the royal banner of France. The king-at-arms then proclaimed *Le Roy est mort!* A stillness of ten minutes' duration ensued. The duc d'Alençon advanced and stood motionless on the brink of the tomb, holding his coronet in his hand. The king-at-arms then suddenly again raised the royal

banner and waving it three times, exclaimed, "Long live Henry III., to whom may God grant a long life!" The heralds and equerries advanced, and raised the banners and arms; the regalia were lifted from the coffin, the peers present put on their coronets, and the choir chanted *Vivat Rex!* The assembly then separated, the obsequies being accomplished—the deceased king's former chamberlains and others remaining to superintend the removal of the body by the subterraneous passages to the vault in which the ashes of Henry II. and Francis II. reposed.[1]

During the early part of August, meanwhile, the deputies from the reformed churches of Languedoc, Guyenne, the Pays d'Aunis and Dauphiny met at Millaud, promptly availing themselves of the permission which Catherine had granted for a conference. The chieftains of the party might have penetrated the queen's secret hostility, so far were the resolutions made from being of that pacific character likely to restore peace to the realm. The condition of Languedoc and the persecution experienced by Damville from the government were first debated. It was then unanimously agreed, in case king Henry on his arrival still declined to grant toleration to his subjects of the reformed faith without disability whatever, to recognize Condé as chief and generalissimo of their armies. The assemblage, moreover, pledged itself to make indefatigable efforts to procure the liberty of the duc d'Alençon, the king of Navarre, Montmorency, and Coss; and unceasingly to agitate until the states-general had been convoked. A few days after the closing of the conference of Millaud, news reached the confederates that Condé had raised a levy of thirty thousand Ger-

[1] Tréspas et Obsèques du très Chrétien Roy de France Charles IX. de ce Nom: Archives Curieuses, tome viii. Etoile: Journal de Henri III. De Thou: Vie de Charles IX. Ste. Foy, Masson, etc.

man troops, which were about to enter France led by prince Christopher, son of the elector-palatine. This intelligence so greatly emboldened the Huguenot leaders that war broke out again in Poitou, the garrison of Lusignan taking the offensive, and harassing a division of the militia levies of the province which had been enrolled by command of the queen. In Perigord the royal troops in their turn broke the truce, and suddenly assailed the Huguenot chieftain Montal, whom they defeated in a skirmish. Catherine did not altogether regret this outbreak; it afforded her a pretext for assembling a powerful body of troops, consisting of ten thousand men with eighteen pieces of artillery, and fairly commencing hostilities before the arrival of the king. The command was conferred by her majesty on the duc de Montpensier, who immediately marched to invest Lusignan.[1]

The intelligence of the distracted condition of the kingdom and of the continuance of the war was notified to Henry when at Mantua. The king, therefore, had hastily continued his journey to Turin. The duke of Savoy Charles Emmanuel, and Marguerite his consort, the daughter of Francis I., received the king with the most cordial welcome. Henry likewise found awaiting him the maréchal de Damville, who, before he finally accepted the articles of Millaud, had determined to make one more overture to gain the ear and favour of his sovereign. The duke and duchess of Savoy warmly interested themselves in the fortunes of the Montmorenci; and Marguerite especially insisted that the sons of the great constable could never be traitors to the grandson of Francis I. The king's favourite, de Lary seigneur de Bellegarde, joined the duchess in her good offices; so that Henry, being still impressed by the pacific counsels which had been given to him by the

[1] Mém. de Bouillon. De Thou. La Popelinière.

sovereigns whose states he had traversed, seemed inclined to adopt a conciliatory policy. Damville, therefore, was admitted to his majesty's presence, and Henry even condescended to ask his advice as to his future conduct of affairs. Damville bluntly exhorted the king to make peace with the Protestants of his realm; and to take the government exclusively into his own hands—he at the same time vindicating himself from the charge of having coalesced with his majesty's enemies. Two days after this audience Cheverny arrived attended by the secretaries de Sauve and de Villeroy. To Cheverny Catherine had intrusted her confidential communication to her son. She bade him urgently pray the king to suspend his decision respecting affairs in France until after his arrival. She indignantly commented on the conduct of the maréchal de Damville; and accused Bellegarde and Pibrac, chamberlains to his majesty of being in league with the Montmorenci to promote the principles of the party termed Les Politiques. She adjured the king to confide in her long experience of affairs, and to return to her unfettered by promises to individuals or parties—when together they could take counsel on the measures to be pursued.[1] The words of Cheverny were echoed by Villequier, who for long afterwards paid humble court to the queen. Catherine, moreover, wrote a long and secret missive to her son with her own hand, which had great effect upon the mind of Henry. The change in the demeanour of the king after his first secret conference with Cheverny was observed with regret by the duke and duchess of Savoy; who wisely ceased thenceforth from importuning the king with further counsels. Bellegarde and Pibrac were made to feel that their master no longer placed implicit trust in their fidelity; and as for the maréchal de Damville, he received nothing but ambiguous replies,

[1] Mém. du Chancélier de Cheverny. De Thou. Davila, liv. v.

to the effect "that his majesty, when once in France, would investigate his position." The duchess of Savoy, meanwhile, amongst other marks of extraordinary honour, entered her nephew's apartment every morning, to be present while his majesty's bed was made, instead of delegating that office to a chamberlain, as was customary.[1] It chanced that one morning Henry left his mother's letter under the pillow of his couch; the letter, therefore, was handed to Marguerite, who took the liberty of reading the document. The advice tendered by the queen to her son relative to Damville inspired the duchess with such indignation that she carried the letter to her husband. The duke of Savoy, therefore, lost no time in demanding from Henry the marshal's *congé*, as he had guaranteed the safety of the latter. The same day Damville was hurriedly escorted to Nice, from whence he embarked for Languedoc. The inimical sentiments of Henry being thus so plainly evidenced, Damville bitterly took oath never to approach the court, or to trust himself in the presence of the king. "Never more!" exclaimed he, "will I look upon his majesty's face excepting it be on canvas." The marshal reached Narbonne in safety, and on his arrival signed the league of Millaud and placed himself in communication with Condé and la Noue.

The amiability and grace of the duchess Marguerite, meantime, very favourably disposed Henry to grant her any petition which had not received the veto of the queen-mother. It was in favour of the alliance of Marguerite de France, with Charles Emmanuel, the conqueror of St. Quentin and the pupil of the emperor

[1] Journal de Henri III. Notes de l'Abbé Lenglet. The custom of one of the royal officers of state being present when the king's bed was made, arose from the fear that some murderous implement might be introduced, as actually happened in the case of Henri IV.; or to watch that the sheets and pillows were not sprinkled with poisonous essences.

Charles V., that Henry II. had consented to restore the duchy of Savoy, subjugated by Francis I. to serve as the high road for his armies into the Milanese.

At the period of Marguerite's marriage the cession of a territory, conquered at the cost of so much blood and treasure, had excited great displeasure, especially as the crown of France gained no equivalent.[1] Two of the strongest fortresses of Piedmont, Pignerol and Savilliano, with the valley of Perouza, had however been retained. The duchess, therefore, put forth her most eloquent pleadings to induce king Henry to restore the entire patrimony of the duke her husband. The honours and pleasures showered upon the king by the court of Turin, added to the caresses of Marguerite, at length prevailed; and Henry issued his mandate for the evacuation of the fortresses and their restoration to their legitimate sovereign. So impolitic, however, was this donation deemed by the king's loyal subjects, that the duc de Nevers, governor of Pignerol, required a discharge under the great seal before he delivered up that fortress with the territory adjacent. The chancellor Birague, moreover, demanded the same guarantee, with the sign manual of king Henry attached, before he consented to seal the letters patent confirmatory of the king's resignation of his Piedmontese territory. Catherine seems to have sanctioned this alienation: she bore great personal friendship to the duchess of Savoy, who had been her early companion; besides, the queen ever proved herself compliant to the desires of her son, where the project interfered not with her own system of policy.

During his residence at Turin Henry bestowed the *bâton* of marshal of France upon Bellegarde,[2] though

[1] Brantôme: Dames Illustres. Vie de Marguerite de France.

[2] Roger de St. Lary, seigneur de Bellegarde, nephew of the maréchal de Termes, and one of Henry's favourite chamberlains.

his recent intercession for Damville had greatly angered his majesty. Henry pleaded his previous solemn engagement when reproached by Catherine for this inconsiderate bounty. To Réné de Villequier the king gave the post of first lord of the bedchamber, though solicited by Catherine to reserve that lucrative office for the maréchal de Retz. Henry replied, "that he regretted he could not follow the advice of his mother, inasmuch as he considered de Retz more than recompensed already for his services." In the abstract Henry was right respecting the maréchal de Retz, had he only acted in accord with his word towards his own favourites. At the death of Henry II. the three brothers de Gondy possessed between them only a revenue of 2000 crowns. They were the sons of a Florentine banker, Gondy, created seigneur du Peron, whose wife entered the service of Catherine de Medici on her marriage. Madame du Peron filled the post of nurse to all Catherine's children: through her unremitting care Francis II. survived the perils of his infancy; and Henry III. chiefly owed his restoration to health from the ulcer which during his boyhood had menaced his life. Catherine, therefore, placed extraordinary confidence in madame du Peron, and demonstrated her regard by the elevation of the sons of the latter. When the queen assumed supreme administration of affairs after the death of Francis II., she appointed the elder de Gondy to a post about the person of the young Charles IX. From this point his rise was rapid. During the subsequent fifteen years Albert de Gondy became possessed of a revenue exceeding 100,000 francs; he had, moreover, besides being the owner of several superb palaces, ready money to the amount of 1,800,000 livres. On his marriage with Claude Catherine de Clermont, widow of the maréchal d'Annebaut, he was created comte and subsequently duc de Retz, marquis de Belle-

Isle, and elevated to the rank of marshal of France.[1] The second brother of the comte de Retz, Pierre de Gondy, embraced the ecclesiastical profession and was nominated to the bishopric of Paris by Charles IX., and finally obtained a cardinal's hat. The bishop had a private revenue exceeding 40,000 livres. The third son of madame du Peron, Charles de Gondy, seigneur de la Tour, was the favoured friend and companion of Charles IX., who made him master of the wardrobe and a knight of St. Michael. Charles de Gondy died a few days after his royal master; from grief, it was generally asserted, at the decease of the king. Another version of the story is that the death of the seigneur de la Tour resulted from the disappointment of his avarice, as the comte de Retz his brother laid claim to the rich wardrobe and furniture of the deceased king —which were the perquisite of the master of the wardrobe—alleging that, as he had in the first instance obtained that appointment for his brother, it was just that he should share in its spoils. Catherine supported the duc de Retz in his deductions, and issued orders accordingly—the seigneur de la Tour having fallen in the good opinion of her majesty, who believed that he

[1] The maréchal duc de Retz died in 1602, leaving four sons: Charles, killed in 1596; Henry, who succeeded his uncle Pierre as cardinal-bishop of Paris; Jean François, who succeeded his brother Henri in the see of Paris and was its first archbishop, and died in 1653; Philippe Emanuel comte de Joigny, general of the galleys, died in 1662. The marshal had two daughters. The marshal's eldest son died, leaving one son, Henry, and two daughters, the youngest being Marguerite Françoise, the beautiful duchesse de Brissac. The second duc de Retz died without posterity, when his honours descended to Pierre, last duc de Retz, son of the comte de Joigny, who espoused his cousin Catherine, sister of the duchesse de Brissac: he was the father of the duchesse de Lesdiguières, the last representative of the house of Gondy. The famous coadjutor and afterwards cardinal de Retz was the son of Philippe Emanuel comte de Joigny, and brother of the last duc de Retz: he died in 1679.

had incited the deceased king to treat her counsels with disregard.

King Henry, after remaining the guest of the duc de Savoye during ten days, resumed his journey; the fatigues of which, however, he now began to feel. A glazed litter was therefore constructed for the use of his majesty at Turin, in which Henry luxuriously performed the remainder of his route. At St. Jean de Morienne Henry found an ambassador from his old friend the elector-palatine; also an envoy from the prince of Condé. The latter sent numerous protestations of fidelity to the king, and appealed to Heaven in witness of the integrity of his intentions. The elector besought the king to restore liberty to the princes, to grant toleration to his Huguenot subjects, and to disband a levy of some thousand German troops which queen Catherine had just enrolled for her son's service. Henry briefly dismissed the ambassadors, refusing even to admit the envoy of Condé to his presence. The king throughout his journey was escorted by the duc de Savoye, at the head of several thousand troops. Magnificent banquets and receptions awaited him in every town on his road; while even in the most remote villages the king found collations spread and preparations made for his repose, with the same ceremony and luxury as in Turin. On the 5th day of September Henry arrived at the bridge at Beauvoisin across the river Guye, which divides the territories of France and Savoy. When Henry alighted from his litter he was received by the duc d'Alençon and the king of Navarre, whom Catherine had sent forwards to greet his majesty at the frontier of his realm.[1] The king received the homage of the princes with great dignity and reserve. He eagerly inquired after his mother, and where her majesty intended to give him the rendezvous. He then

[1] Cheverny. Mathieu. Hist. du Règne de Henri III.

coldly dismissed his brother and the king of Navarre, intimating that it had been better if they had presented themselves after that interview. The king resumed his journey the following day, September 6th. Queen Catherine, meanwhile, quitted Paris at the commencement of the preceding month of August, and had travelled leisurely towards the frontier, passing through the towns of Dijon and Chalons.[1] At this latter place Catherine reviewed a body of six thousand Swiss troops, which Schomberg had levied by her order for the vigorous prosecution of the war. Accompanied by her daughter Marguerite and by the principal ladies of her court, Catherine continued her progress to Lyons. A few days afterwards Henry arrived at the Pont de Beauvoisin; the queen, therefore, advanced as far as Bourgoin, a village about a league and a half from Lyons. The meeting between Henry and his mother drew tears from both. The king threw himself into Catherine's arms and tenderly embraced her in the presence of the court, and then kneeling, he kissed her hand. For long the queen and her beloved son afterwards conferred together privately, the king thanking his mother for the preservation of his crown and for his happy return. "I owe life to you, madame and most dear mother; and now, moreover, liberty and my crown!" Henry after this interview received the principal courtiers before proceeding to Lyons. The duc d'Alençon and the king of Navarre were summoned by Catherine, and formally presented by her majesty to king Henry. "Sire," exclaimed she, "deign to receive these two prisoners, whom I now resign to your majesty's pleasure. I have informed you of their caprices and misdemeanours. It is for your majesty to decree their fate!" The king thereupon gave his hand to the duc d'Alençon to kiss, and very graciously addressed

[1] De Thou, liv. lviii.

the king of Navarre. Monsieur, who never knew how to contain himself, and who was perpetually degrading his dignity by ignoble excuses, volunteered a justification, in which he stated "that the king of Navarre and himself had every reason to be dissatisfied with the late king, who had shamefully maltreated them; the which, to their very great regret, had induced them to plot designs, which since the decease of his said majesty they had relinquished, having now no other desire than to live and die Henry's faithful subjects." Henry listened smilingly: he then advanced, and with the gracious condescension which he knew how to assume, embraced both the princes, saying, "Be it so, mes frères; the past is forgotten. I restore you both to liberty, and ask only in return that you will give me your love and fealty. If you cannot love me, love yourselves sufficiently to abstain from plots and intrigues which cannot but harm you, and which are unworthy the dignity of your birth."[1] Marguerite next came forward to greet her brother and king. Henry looked at her intently; for du Guast, Villequier, and even Cheverny had reported to his majesty the eager interest with which Marguerite espoused the faction of Monsieur. He, however, embraced her warmly, and uttered some complimentary phrases on her beauty: "Nevertheless," says Marguerite,[2] "when the king approached to embrace me I shivered and trembled from head to foot, the which emotion I had the greatest difficulty to conceal." Henry then greeted mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, who still remained far as ever from the attainment of matronly honours. The lovely face which the king prized most on earth—that of

[1] Mathieu: Hist. du Règne de Henri III. liv. vii. p. 402. L'arrivée du Roy en France et sa Reception par sa Mère. Sommaire Discours des Choses survenues, 8vo, Paris, 1574.

[2] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite, liv. ii.

Marie de Clèves—was not, however, visible to greet him, or to claim its triumph over every other rival. The princesse de Condé, when Catherine quitted Paris, was too far advanced in her pregnancy to render a journey to Lyons practicable.

The royal cortège set forth about five o'clock in the afternoon for Lyons. The most loyal preparations were there made for the king's reception. Prayers had been publicly offered in all the churches during the preceding day, Sunday, September the 5th, in thanksgiving for his majesty's safe return. An oration was pronounced in the cathedral by Ste. Foy, bishop-elect of Nevers, in which he predicted a glorious future to the Gallican church under the sway of Henry III.; "for who," said the courtly prelate, "but those most barbarous, contumacious, and disaffected could refuse veneration and obedience to such a monarch?" The king was met a quarter of a league from the city by Mandalot, governor of the Lyonnais, and his staff, accompanied by the municipality of Lyons and by the principal nobles and officers of the province. Henry entered Lyons in a chariot draped with black velvet. At his right hand sat queen Catherine, and opposite, the duc d'Alençon. All these royal personages wore robes of violet velvet. On one side of the chariot rode the king and queen of Navarre on horseback, on the other the duc de Savoye. The cardinals de Bourbon, de Guise, de Lorraine, and d'Esté followed; and afterwards came a train of courtiers. An address was presented to Henry on his entry into the town, which he traversed, greeted by the most enthusiastic cheers. At the Quai de Rontalon the king found a magnificent barge, prepared after the model of the famed Venetian 'Bucentaur,' to convey him across the river Saône to the fort de Pierre-en-Suze, then the residence of the archbishops of Lyons. The saloon of this state-barge was painted with

Henry's colours, orange, green, and tan, the devices being deemed a model of ingenuity. The portal was adorned on one side with a representation of Jupiter wielding his thunders, and on the other was a picture of Juno. Henry was here again addressed by Mandalot, who, in the name of the city, requested his majesty's acceptance of the barge.[1]

In Paris, and in all the chief towns of the realm, similar rejoicings were celebrated. A procession, comprehending the parliament, the officers of the high courts, and the religious orders, perambulated the capital, and proceeded to Notre Dame to return thanks to God for the happy arrival of his majesty.

The following day a council was holden at Lyons—one the most important that ever assembled under the presidency of any previous sovereign of France. The subject of debate was the expediency of continuing the war against the Calvinists or of accepting their propositions, granting a general amnesty, and thus restoring peace to the realm. This question, nevertheless, had been previously decided in the secret councils of queen Catherine and her allies, the princes of Guise. As soon as Henry was dressed on the morning after his arrival in Lyons, Catherine entered his chamber alone, and a long and secret conference ensued. Cheverny was then summoned by their majesties, and afterwards the cardinal de Bourbon. Accompanied by these personages, the king and his mother entered the council-chamber, where were assembled the cardinal de Lorraine, Paul de Foix archbishop of Narbonne, the duc de Guise, the duc de Nemours, the chancellor Birague, the maréchal de Retz, Villequier, Bellegarde, Quélus, and Souvré. Pibrac was excluded on account of his friendship for Damville and the princes of Mont-

[1] Godefroy: Grand Cérém. de France, tome ii. Entrée de Henri III. dans la Ville de Lyons, vol. ii.

morency, whose early patronage had greatly advanced his fortunes. Catherine opened the conferences by relating the incidents of her recent regency, and the progress of the campaign against la Noue. She exultingly commented on the efficient condition of the force she had sent out under Montpensier then before Lusignan; and the Swiss and German mercenaries levied by de Retz and Schomberg ready to take the field. The queen then bitterly rehearsed the articles of Millaud; she commented on the determined hostility shown by Damville,[1] Condé, and la Noue; and ended her address by proving that never had the king a better opportunity for exterminating heresy than the present. Paul de Foix rose to reply to this statement. In a speech of eloquent fervour he deprecated the continuance of hostilities. He showed that the deeper the depression of his majesty's Huguenot subjects, the more glorious would be the king's clemency. He prayed the king, finally, in language glowing with Christian moderation, to grant an amnesty, and to show mercy to his miserable subjects. The pleadings of the illustrious prelate, however, were of little avail; Henry's mind had been poisoned by the promptings of Villequier and du Guast, and by the counsels of the queen. These young nobles, at the commencement of the new reign, were obliged to succumb to the power of Catherine,[2] and, to maintain

[1] "Sire," said Catherine, "Damville et Huguenot c'est la même chose. Je suis faschée contre le duc de Savoye, qui s'est tant passionée pour luy; car si on l'eut retenu à Turin la France pourrait dire que la paix est revenue avec votre majesté!"—Mathieu: Hist. de Henri III.

[2] "La reine," writes the ambassador Michel to the Venetian senate, "a tant de pouvoir sur l'esprit du roi que ni lui ni les autres n'osent la contredire. Elle ne se soucie ni de la haine, ni des imputations dont on l'accable; elle connait les livres publiés contre elle et qu'on vend presque publiquement dans les boutiques. Rien ne la déconcerte; mais toujours plus hardie, et plus intrépide, elle brave la fatigue et les dangers."—Relazione de 1575. Michel was at this period resident ambassador at the court of Henry III.

their position, found themselves compelled to speak in council in support of the policy which she espoused. Accordingly, Villequier rose to reply to the address of de Foix, and even presumed to taunt that veteran statesman with partiality and unsoundness of comprehension. Villequier continued, in terms of almost blasphemous adulation, to incite Henry to continue the war. "Sire," said he, "either your majesty will perish with the realm, or those so-called Protestants must be annihilated! This thing, sire, is now of easy execution. Show yourself not ungrateful towards God, and tempt not His wrath by neglecting this most favourable opportunity of rendering Him service. Sire, I presume to throw myself humbly at your majesty's feet to supplicate you to adopt this glorious policy. Sire, rise and conquer!"[1] The duc de Guise then said a few words; but cautious and self-contained, the duke, perceiving that the policy he advocated was gaining the ascendency, compromised himself not by any hostile harangue. The king and queen then quitted the council-chamber, and retired to confer alone. The following morning the royal decision was manifested by the despatch of couriers to the duc de Montpensier, commanding him diligently to continue the war. The maréchal de Bellegarde, being a personage obnoxious to Catherine, was sent into Dauphiny to prove his loyal zeal by opposing his friend and relative Damville. Pibrac was despatched upon a mission to Poland to obtain the restitution of the rich effects which Henry had abandoned; and to sound the inclinations of the Polish people upon the abdication of his majesty in favour of his brother d'Alençon. Réné de Villequier, on the contrary, was rewarded by his elevation to the forfeited office of the maréchal de Montmorency, as governor of the Isle de France.

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lviii.

The fêtes with which the entry of king Henry was celebrated ceased when the news reached Lyons of the decease of the duchess of Savoy,[1] Marguerite de France. The duke of Savoy had previously quitted Lyons on receiving intelligence of the increasing illness of his consort, to whom he was much attached. Marguérite's disorder was a pulmonary affection—that scourge which carried off so many of the children of Francis I. This temporary suspension of the court receptions gave Henry leisure to indulge the indolent luxury which now had become habitual. His time was spent in writing passionate epistles to Marie de Clèves, to whom he again promised fidelity and the diadem of France; and engaged immediately after the *accouchement* of the princess to take the necessary steps to obtain her divorce. So peremptory was Henry's expressed determination, that Catherine presumed not to oppose her son's designs. The king also spent many hours of the day in his golden barge on the river Rhône. Reclining indolently with his favourites, Villequier, Quélus, and du Guast, the king invented fresh regulations for his court; he revised the existing code of etiquette, and prescribed a ceremonial still more tedious and minute. "The king," says a correspondent writing to the pope after Henry's entry into Lyons,[2] "is a young man as juvenile in mind as can well be imagined. He is a poor creature, most indolent and voluptuous, passing half his life grovelling in bed." "The king," wrote the nuncio, "is weak and luxurious; he certainly will never have posterity to inherit his crown."[3] The relation of the king's demeanour given by the Venetian ambassador Michel, is a trifle less unfavourable than the preceding reports; the foreign envoys, however,

[1] September 18, 1574.
[2] Michelet: La Ligue. Archives du Vatican, car. ii.
[3] Ibid.

could scarce refrain from openly testifying their surprise at being so signally disabused respecting that chivalrous vigour of character which had been everywhere attributed to Henry when duc d'Anjou. "The king," says Michel, writing to the seigniory of Venice, "is better in health than when you, most serene lords, saw him. His complexion is not so wan, and he has become more animated and healthful to the eye; he has even increased in *embonpoint*. I must inform you, however, that it is believed here that the king cannot live long; he suffers from secret causes and from perpetual indigestion. For this reason he never drinks wine, nor has he done so since his youth. The king is intelligent, and may even be said to possess good sense. He likes no stirring exercises, such as the chase, tennis, or equestrian games; consequently, he shows no relish for tournaments or jousts. It was expected that the king would prove himself one of the greatest and most valiant of warriors, because in his youth he was present at several grand battles, and was always victorious. This is to be regretted in this country; because every noble, lord, or prince who does not show predilection for warlike pursuits is holden in little esteem."[1] Villequier, moreover, advised the king to affect the reserve and state of an Eastern potentate; he counselled him to show himself seldom to his people, and then only when surrounded by the pomp and magnificence of sovereign state. He attempted to instil the notion that kings ought to show themselves alone on supreme occasions of parade, wrath, or of clement magnanimity. To familiarize the people with the sight of the sovereign was, according to de Villequier, to destroy the *prestige* of a king as God's vicegerent.

While the king floated in his gilded barge, Catherine

[1] Relatione de Giovanni Michel, Ambasciatore Veneto, anno 1575: Tommasio.

performed the functions of royalty. Content to witness the inaction of her son, she forgot that the favourites who surrounded and directed the king must, ere long, acquire an overwhelming influence over his mind; nor were they likely, when this was achieved, to abstain from interference and eventual control over affairs of state.

Henry, meanwhile, perceived with great uneasiness the amicable relations subsisting between the king and queen of Navarre and the duc d'Alençon. This *liaison* was deemed by the king prejudicial to his interests, and subversive of that entire influence which it was his aim to exercise over the court. He therefore seized every opportunity to disturb that good understanding by insinuations, and by a most unworthy system of private abuse of each of the parties to the other. Madame de Sauve afforded the king the opportunity he desired for attempting to alienate the friendship between the king of Navarre and the duc d'Alençon. Both the princes sought her favours; the king, therefore, through his favourites, collected all manner of stories, which at his *coucher* he repeated to one or other of the princes to excite his jealous anger. Three days after the arrival of king Henry in Lyons, Marguerite had convincing proof that her brother's animosity towards herself had not abated. It happened that on the afternoon of Sunday, the 12th of September, Marguerite, attended by madame de Curton, a lady of mature age who had been her governess, by madame de Nevers, the duchesse de Retz, and three maids of honour, went to visit the convent of St. Pierre of Lyons, leaving queen Catherine engaged in the composition of despatches for the provinces. It so happened that, as the coach of the queen of Navarre left the court-yard of the palace, two gentlemen of the king's household, MM. de Liancour and Camille, who was one of Henry's favourites, came up,

and demanding permission to accompany the queen of Navarre, they sprang on the steps of the chariot containing the three maids of honour, and clinging to the portal, commenced a merry conversation.

Marguerite thus attended proceeded to St. Pierre, the gentlemen being at her majesty's request admitted within the outer court of the convent, to await her return. Whilst Marguerite was in the convent, it happened that Henry passed on foot attended by the king of Navarre, M. d'O., M. de Ruffé, and another, on his way to visit Quélus, who was indisposed. The carriage of the queen attracted the attention of Henry; he turned, therefore, to the king of Navarre, and exclaimed, "Ah! there stands your wife's chariot! and here at hand is the lodging of M. de Bidé. I wager that our Margot is gone alone to visit him." The king, therefore, commanded M. de Ruffé to go and ascertain if his suspicion were correct by visiting Bidé, whose abode was on the Place de Terreaux, then the principal quarter of Lyons, and where most of the cavaliers of the court resided. Ruffé accordingly obeyed, and being a friend of Du Guast, whose hatred towards Marguerite was notorious, he returned, exclaming, "Sire! the birds have been; but they are flown!" Henry, therefore, hastened back to the palace, and seeking the queen his mother, he told her that his sister's imprudence, as of yore, was a scandal to the royal family; and that it was her majesty's duty to check such extravagances. Marguerite, meanwhile, unconscious of the storm about to break over her head, returned during the evening, accompanied by the same personages. In her private cabinet she found her husband awaiting her. Henri looked grave; he then began to laugh, and said, "Madame, go and visit the queen your mother; I wager that you will return very much inclined to weep. Marguerite asked, wherefore? "I will not tell you,"

replied Henri; "but satisfy yourself that I do not believe a word of the story; it is only a *ruse* to make us quarrel, in order that my friendship for your brother may thereby be impaired." Marguerite, therefore, without asking more questions, at once proceeded to Catherine's apartment. In the ante-chamber she found the duc de Guise alone, who came up, and taking her hand, said, "I have been awaiting you, madame, to warn you that the queen your mother is very greatly incensed against you." Guise then, in a low voice, repeated the story brought by the king, who had very emphatically declared his resolve to put down all public scandals. Marguerite thanked the duke; flatly denied the story, and entered the saloon. The queen had retired to an adjacent cabinet temporarily constructed, for her majesty's convenience, of laths and tapestry, so that every word there spoken could be heard in the saloon. The duchesse de Nemours[1] and other ladies were in waiting, and the former approached Marguerite and whispered her counsel that the queen should retire, and not that evening venture into her mother's presence. The proud blood, however, rose to Marguerite's cheek, and she replied, "No, madame; I shall not retire. If I had done the evil thing of which the king has chosen to accuse me, it might be advisable to follow your counsel. I am innocent, and choose to enlighten her majesty." Marguerite, therefore, entered the cabinet, where Catherine sat alone writing. As soon as the queen saw her daughter, she rose, and reprimanded her in the most violent language; stating, to shield her son, that a *valet de chambre* in the service of the king had told his master that he had seen her enter Bidé's lodging. Marguerite replied that the ac-

[1] Anne d'Esté, granddaughter of Louis XII., and mother of the duc de Guise. Anne espoused, secondly, Jacques de Savoye, duc de Nemours, 1566.

cusation was false; that she had been to St. Pierre, and requested her majesty to summon the ladies her companions, who would testify to the truth. She also desired that the king might be requested to question his favourites Liancour and Camille. Catherine, nevertheless, would not listen to Marguerite's exculpation; but continued to overwhelm her with reproaches, which were audible to the ladies in the adjacent chamber. She said that "the king could not be mistaken; and that she believed every word of the accusation." The queen of Navarre then coolly replied, that she knew whom to thank for this kindness, and would for ever remember! Marguerite then returned to her own apartments, where she was again joined by the king of Navarre. "Well, have you not found my words true?" asked his majesty. Marguerite, however, was weeping, being deeply sensible of the affront, and yet more of the hostile feelings which it demonstrated on the part of the king. "Never mind, m'aymie," resumed Henri; "be assured that the king your brother, when he hears the truth from Liancour at his *coucher* to-night, will be anxious to-morrow to be reconciled to you." Whilst Henri and Marguerite were conversing, the duc d'Alençon entered. Monsieur embraced his sister, and vowed to make her accusers retract; then grasping the hand of the king of Navarre, he declared that every attempt to disunite them should serve to rivet still more closely their alliance. The following morning Catherine was informed of the truth of the occurrence by the king himself. Henry expressed sorrow at having made so hasty an accusation, and begged the queen to reconcile him to Marguerite, the influence of whose tact and beauty he greatly dreaded. The queen, therefore, sent for her daughter, and coldly informed her that now she felt convinced that there was no foundation in the story of her visit to Bidé's lodging; and that her brother the

king was anxious and willing to make every public and private reparation for the affront he had unwittingly offered her. Marguerite made no reply, and was about to withdraw, when the door opened, and king Henry appeared. He advanced towards his sister, and prayed her forgiveness in terms of most insinuating earnestness. He promised never again to suspect her; and entreated her to reconcile him to his brothers of Alençon and Navarre.[1] The affair, therefore, was soon forgotten at court, though Marguerite found it impossible to pardon, especially as Henry continued, through madame de Sauve, to do all in his power to kindle dissension between her brother and the king of Navarre; and to alienate the latter from herself, by assuring Henri that Marguerite would never forgive his infidelity, and that she was awaiting but a favourable opportunity to join his enemies.

In the midst of these *tracasseries* news reached Lyons of the *accouchement* of the princesse de Condé, who gave birth to a daughter.[2] The little princess was named Catherine, after her aunt the duchesse de Guise, at whose hôtel she was born. Henry was quite joyous at this event; and despite the counsel of the queen, he commenced with the utmost ardour those necessary negotiations with the Holy See for dissolving the marriage of Marie with Condé. The king took into his confidence the ducs de Guise and de Nevers, brothers-in-law of the princess. The princess continued to make progress towards convalescence, when towards the end of the month of October dangerous symptoms showed

[1] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite, liv. ii.

[2] Catherine de Bourbon was born October 7, 1574. The little princess inherited her mother's rich heritage. Her guardians were the ducs de Nevers and de Guise. It is probable that she never saw the prince de Condé her father. Catherine died in the Louvre, unmarried, December 30th, 1595, and is buried in the church of St. Germain des Près.—Anselme Ste. Marthe: Hist. Généalog. de la Royale Maison de France.

themselves. Marie's strength suddenly vanished; a distressing cough harassed her, and her appetite failed. The physicians pronounced the illness of the princess to be inflammation of the lungs, a malady to which she was constitutionally subject. On the 30th day of October, 1574, therefore, the fair and gentle Marie de Clèves expired, declaring with her last breath "that she had espoused the most generous as well as the most jealous of princes!"[1] The sudden decease of the princesse de Condé provoked many speculations, occurring as it did at the moment when the crown of France appeared about to circle her brow. The prince de Condé was reported to have sent Marie, immediately after the decease of Charles IX., a letter sprinkled with a subtle poison, the inhaling of which occasioned a sure but lingering death, maddened by the certainty of eventually beholding her the wife of his sovereign. Catherine de Medici was also suspected of having had some influence on the untimely fate of a princess whose beauty and gentleness won all hearts. Catherine, however, had no reason for perpetrating this crime, however much she might disapprove of the king's selfish violence in depriving Condé of his consort. The disposition of Marie would never have menaced the tenure of the queen's power; while the sanction which Catherine eventually gave to the king's choice of a consort demonstrated that her enmity could not have been moved by ambitious motives to procure a more august alliance for her son.

The intelligence of the decease of the princesse de Condé was communicated to king Henry by his mother on All Saints Day, November 1st, after the return of his majesty from the cathedral, where with the king of Navarre and the duc d'Alençon he had been present at high mass and had communicated. Henry fell back in

[1] Etoile: Journal de Henri III. année 1574.

his chair in speechless grief and agitation. After an interval he threw himself despairingly on a couch at hand and dismissed every one from his presence, even his favoured Villequier. The one sentiment which, though it was irregular and misguided, like every other in Henry's life, yet had truth, constancy, and vitality, the king saw himself bereft of. Henry's attachment to Marie de Clèves, if not pure and legitimate, was at least sincere and absorbing; and if it had not been extinguished by the premature death of the princess, it is impossible to predict what effect it might have had in changing the character of a reign the most effete and unfortunate in the annals of French history.

During three days Henry shut himself up in his apartment, refusing to admit any person or to break a morsel of food. By the end of that period his majesty's exhaustion was so complete that Villequier, in the presence of Catherine and the duc de Guise, forcibly compelled his unhappy master to swallow sustenance.[1] The apartments occupied by the court were hung with black draperies, and the courtiers assumed habits of the deepest mourning. When Henry re-appeared no one would have recognised in his melancholy and haggard countenance the handsome features which a few days previously had beamed on his courtiers. To suit the lugubrious inclination of the king's mind, funereal emblems were dispersed about his apartments and the reception-rooms of the queen his mother. Ribbons embroidered with death-heads became the mode. The king himself wore them, as did all the ladies and cavaliers who entered his majesty's presence. For years afterwards Henry could not endure to hear the name of Marie de Clèves mentioned. The cardinal de Bourbon once having occasion to receive the king in his abbey of St. Germain des Près,

[1] Dreux de Radier: Vie de Marie de Clèves. Mezeray: Grande Histoire. Brantôme.

where the body of the princesse de Condé was deposited, Henry shudderingly declared himself unable, when so near her beloved remains, to take part in any festive ceremonies whatever. The cardinal thereupon caused the coffin of the princess to be removed, and interred in a vault in the church of the Franciscans at Nevers.[1]

The sojourn at Lyons had now become odious to Henry; the gloomy chambers of the old fort de Pierre-en-Suze and his own depression of mind caused him eagerly to seek change. He accordingly intimated his resolve to proceed to Avignon, under pretext that he should be nearer to the seat of war in Languedoc, and therefore able the better to check the treasonable machinations of the duc de Damville. Catherine vainly represented to Henry that Avignon was a place in perilous vicinity to foes so energetic and unscrupulous as Damville and Montbrun; the king nevertheless insisted on setting out thither on the 16th day of November. As Henry, attended by the cardinal de Lorraine and other noblemen of his suite, descended from his apartment to set out on his journey, the duchesse de Montmorency, Diane de France, threw herself at his majesty's feet, and supplicated him to have compassion on her husband the marshal, whose health was suffering from his incarceration, and who had never been accused of any crime whatever. The duchess entreated, if there existed any charge against Montmorency, that it might be investigated, when the marshal would triumphantly confute his accusers. Several ladies in the train of the duchess joined in her supplications. Madame de Mont-

[1] The following epitaph was composed for the princesse de Condé:

Celle qui gît ici n'avoit point de seconde,
En vertus, en beauté, en grâces, en honneur;
Et pour dire en un mot ce qu'elle eut de bonheur
Ci-gisent les Amours et les Grâces du monde.

Ste. Marthe: Hist. Généalog. de la Royale Maison de France, liv. xxvi.

morency, who was the illegitimate sister of the king, had been some days in Lyons waiting for a favourable opportunity to accost his majesty; she having pointedly declined Catherine's invitation to appear at court in her accustomed rank, or yet to crave especial audience of the king. Henry, who greatly esteemed the duchess, whom he always termed *ma sœur*, embraced her cordially, and exhorted her to hope, saying, "Trust me, my sister, I will take to heart that which you demand!" The cardinal de Lorraine advanced, and, to the surprise of all present, warmly interceded for the marshal, saying, "that it was just that Montmorency should be permitted to vindicate himself." The duchess frankly extended her hand towards the prelate in token of gratitude. It was the last political act of the great cardinal; so that his troublous career, fraught with so much tyranny and violence, thus closed with a deed of mercy. The same day the cardinal de Lorraine, moreover, admonished Catherine on the injustice of her proceedings towards the marshal; and a second time solicited the king to ameliorate Montmorency's position. Catherine made some indifferent response; while Henry replied "that he could not suddenly and without examination cancel the acts of the preceding reign. He would, however, immediately examine into the causes of Montmorency's detention." This reply was sent to the duchesse de Montmorency, who forthwith retired to Chantilly.[1]

Henry continued his journey, and arrived at Tournon, where he remained for a week; two causes compelling the king to make this delay—the insecurity of the roads, and the exhausted condition of the privy purse. The scarcity of money was so great, that the chief nobles were compelled to defray the costs of their entertainments at court; while the pages in waiting were reduced to such straits, that during the journey to Avignon

[1] De Thou, liv. lviii.

several found themselves compelled to leave their cloaks in pledge for the night's lodging. As for queen Catherine, whose lavish expenditure for the levy of mercenary regiments had occasioned this temporary dearth, her majesty borrowed the sum of five thousand francs from the treasurer le Comte for her own personal use, and to provide lodgings for her train of ladies. The witty courtiers relieved their *ennui* by the composition of epigrams and dirges to the memory of *ce diable d'argent qu'on disoit estre trespassé*.[1] On the 23rd of November the king arrived in Avignon. A serious loss befel the king and queen of Navarre, during the passage down the Rhône, of the baggage belonging to their court. A boat containing about forty personages of their suite, including Alphonse de Gondy, maître d'hôtel to queen Marguerite, and laden with rich furniture and other effects, in passing the pont St. Esprit, struck against one of the arches of the bridge and was capsized. Thirty persons were drowned, including Gondy; and the greater portion of the furniture was lost.[2] Henry, on his arrival at Avignon, mentioned this incident in a despatch addressed to Fénelon, that he might communicate it to queen Elizabeth. He also stated that the reason of his proposed sojourn in Avignon arose from his desire to conciliate his subjects of Languedoc. Accordingly, to manifest his pacific intentions, Henry without delay wrote letters to the Rochellois, offering to grant them a complete amnesty, provided that they would lay down arms and recognise his royal authority. As the king, however, made no mention of granting freedom of worship, or of convoking the states-general of the realm that the question of toleration in religious

[1] Mezeray: Grande Histoire.

[2] Lettre de Claude de Lorraine, Duc d'Aumale, to Anne d'Esté, Duchesse de Nemours: MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth. 8676, fol. 198. Fontanieu, portef. 335-6.

matters might from thenceforth become a recognised principle of the constitution, the people of La Rochelle indignantly refused to treat with Henry's envoys, the abbé de Brantôme and Jean de la Haye.[1] Henry, moreover, despatched missives to Damville, requiring him to lay down arms and repair to court; but as his majesty offered no guarantees for the duke's safety, and made no mention of the maréchal de Montmorency and his brothers Thoré and Méru, and still refused to grant toleration to his subjects, with an amnesty, to be followed by the meeting of the States, the king's messenger was publicly dismissed with ignominy by Damville.[2] Upon this the queen wrote to Montmorency, commanding him, if he desired liberty and the favour of the king, to write to his brothers Damville, Thoré, and Méru, exhorting them to submit to their sovereign and to abandon the cause of the malcontents. The marshal cleverly evaded the snare by requesting the king to cause such missives as he desired to be drawn up by a secretary of state, when he would sign them, and his majesty might himself cause their distribution in the south.[3]

Great jealousies, during these negotiations, had arisen at court between the young lords of the king's suite. The dissensions between Villequier and du Guast divided the household. The king, languid and indifferent, for some time declined to act as arbiter, though he covertly favoured du Guast, who had taken the opportunity of Henry's grief for the loss of the princess de Condé to recommend himself to the royal favour by the most extravagant display of sorrow. The brave marquis de Souvré, amid the distractions of the court,

[1] De Thou. Brantôme.

[2] Lettres du Roi Henri III. à M. de Damville: Bibl. Imp. Béth. 8822, fol. 41.

[3] De Thou. Etoile. Dupleix.

alone of Henry's immediate attendants showed manly honour and dignity. Souvré, therefore, never was admitted by the king to that privacy and familiar converse, which he bestowed on his other favourites. Henry, nevertheless, trusted Souvré; though he stood always somewhat in awe of the honourable frankness of his character. Accordingly, about this period he nominated the marquis to the post of master of the robes and chamberlain-in-chief, and made him governor of the fortress of Vincennes. Du Guast at the same time was created a marquis, which so incensed M. de Villequier, that he demanded liberty to retire from court for a season; which permission the king readily granted.

Queen Catherine, meanwhile, proposed several matrimonial alliances to king Henry; her majesty observing to her son that his spirits would revive after the arrival of a consort; while it was highly expedient, in a political sense, to depose Monsieur from his position as heir-presumptive by the birth of sons of his own to succeed to the crown. Henry acquiesced, for his distrust of his brother daily augmented; and, like Charles IX., he now often selected the king of Navarre as the recipient of his complaints, won by the frank and cordial demeanour of the latter. The queen, in the first instance, proposed to her son her goddaughter madame Catherine de Navarre, daughter of Jeanne d'Albret and sister of the king of Navarre. The princess, however, was of a delicate constitution, slightly lame, and possessed little beauty of feature. She was, moreover, ardently attached to the Protestant ritual. This obvious impediment to the alliance of the princess of Navarre with Henry III., nevertheless, had induced Catherine to propose the union; as therein the queen descried fresh opportunity for overtures to the Huguenots, with a view to their final extermination. Henry, however, flatly declined to ask for the hand of madame Catherine;

while the princess herself demonstrated the utmost aversion to the project. Her majesty next mentioned the widowed queen of Charles IX., Elizabeth of Austria, with her rich dower and potent kindred. The king, however, also showed unmistakeable dislike to this suggestion. In the train of the queen was another beautiful and vivacious princess of Lorraine, Marie, daughter of the marquis d'Elbœuf;[1] and the melancholy of the king never seemed less oppressive than while in her society. When his majesty, after the decease of the princess of Condé, entered the saloon of Catherine, after saluting the queen, his eyes wandered in search of Marie de Lorraine; and daily she received the honour of being selected as the royal partner in the *promenades* or *fêtes* of the court. Catherine beheld the inclination of the king with extreme annoyance and alarm. Marie was the niece of the cardinal de Lorraine; and the queen remembered with indignation the affronts she had received while the crown-matrimonial of France rested on the head of the Scottish Mary, also a princess of Lorraine and niece of the cardinal. In addition to this source of dislike the queen, moreover, never forgot that the charms of yet another Marie de Lorraine, sister of the cardinal and the mother of Mary Stuart, had nearly occasioned her own repudiation while she was yet dauphiness of France and a childless wife.[2] In great disquietude, therefore, the queen remonstrated with her son; and represented the ills which had risen from the elevation of the daughters of Guise to the throne. Henry agreed; and then asked his mother why the princess Louise de Lorraine, daughter of the comte de Vaudemont, should not be deemed a suitable

[1] Marie was the daughter of Réné marquis d'Elbœuf, fifth son of Claude first duc de Guise and Antoinette de Bourbon. Her mother was Louise de Harcourt.

[2] Life of Marguerite d'Angoulême, Queen of Navarre, vol. ii. p. 309.

aspirant for the crown-matrimonial? Catherine became still more troubled: she remembered the likeness to the princesse de Condé which had caused Henry, when as king of Poland he made sojourn at the court of Nancy, to offer to the princess Louise homage so conspicuous. The queen, therefore, angrily observed "that the princess Louise was also the near relative of the cardinal and his nephews of Guise; and that, moreover, the affections of Louise were given to prince Paul of Salms; while it was known that her parents were desirous that she should espouse the comte de Brienne." Her majesty, after commenting on the inferior birth of the princess, whom she designated as "une puînée de Lorraine," observed that the honour of the crown demanded that at least the future queen should not have been approached by any one of his majesty's subjects in the guise of a suitor. Henry perceiving that his mother was prepared to offer determined opposition to any matrimonial overtures to a princess of Lorraine, impatiently demanded whom, then, her majesty would recommend to him for a consort. Catherine responded that she had been about to propose the princess Elizabeth,[1] sister of John III. king of Sweden, of whose beauty of person she had received the most vivid report. The consent of the king being with difficulty extorted, for the commencement of this negotiation the secretary of state Pinart was deputed to proceed to Stockholm, to make a formal demand for the hand of the Swedish princess. In the suite of Pinart Henry sent his painter Nicholas Belon, who received his majesty's commands to execute a miniature of the princess, which was to be sent for Henry's inspection and approval before the ratification of the marriage-contract by Pinart. The king reluctantly assented to this matrimonial overture for the hand of a princess who could speak but her own

[1] Daughter of Gustavus Wasa, by his queen Margaret Loholn.

language and the German tongue; though this ignorance in her future daughter-in-law agreed well with Catherine's projects.

On the week preceding the Christmas of 1574 Henry notified his intention of joining a religious procession of the fraternity of Flagellants, which was to pass through the streets of Avignon on an unusually large scale. This was Henry's first public appearance in these processions. Subsequently his singular patronage of this order disgusted his subjects and degraded his royal rank. The death of the wife of Condé, the event that clouded the accession of Henry III., inspired him with a languid sentimentality which led him into all kinds of extravagancies. During a portion of the day the king too often abandoned himself to the most inexcusable dissipations; while, during the remaining half, he would be found on his knees performing some abject act of self-imposed penance. Catherine, strong in her worldly wisdom and decision of purpose, looked on these vagaries with contemptuous indifference, and spoke approvingly of the king's piety to the duc de Guise. Monsieur composed satirical verses, and showed them to his friends. The king of Navarre, good-natured and humorous, joked openly at the expense of the king; and intimated that his majesty's penitential exercises were more to his taste when viewed at a distance rather than near.

The fraternity of Flagellants was first organized in the thirteenth century. The town of Perugia having been decimated by plague and famine, a number of the survivors agreed to deprecate the Divine wrath by perambulating the streets, bearing torches and olive-branches in one hand and a scourge in the other, with which each penitent flagellated his neighbour. The fraternity was subsequently organized on a large scale, and received the papal confirmation. Schisms, how-

ever, soon rent the unity of the new brotherhood; chiefly, as may be supposed, in matters of form and respecting the amount of discipline to be inflicted on the penitents. The society, therefore, which then comprehended numerous members, divided into three parties or factions, which were distinguished by a blue, black, or white banner; the fraternity, nevertheless, agreeing to continue to celebrate its processions as usual, without other distinction than the display of the flag of its various devotees.

When the intention of Henry became known, all the nobles hastened to enroll themselves as members of the fraternity of the white banner, which the king had chosen. Catherine extended her patronage to the faction of the black Flagellants. The king of Navarre offered to join whichever party the king pleased to indicate; but as Henri's tone was ironical, his majesty could not preserve his gravity while dispensing on this occasion with the company of his brother-in-law.

The procession accordingly took place under circumstances of great pomp, the duc d'Alençon, and even the queen-mother following, each bearing a torch. The king, who alone of the royal family wore the coarse sackcloth garb of the penitents, was preceded by the cardinal de Lorraine, clad in full pontificals, with bare head and sandalled feet, bearing aloft a silver crucifix. The weather was inclement; and the keen blast from the adjacent mountains of Auvergne was severely felt by the prelate, who while at Lyons had suffered from fever. The three hours of fatiguing progress with the motley assemblage it had pleased the king to patronize, greatly augmented the cardinal's indisposition, so that on his return to his abode he found himself compelled to retire to bed. The following morning the cardinal was reported as insensible, and in the access of a brain-fever of the worst description. The delirium

of the unfortunate prelate is described as having been terrible to witness. He recapitulated the events of his troubled career; while his last words are described as a rhapsody of prayer mingled with profane invocations, sighs, and denunciations against his enemies. The cardinal never rallied; he expired in agony early in the morning of the 23rd of December, 1574.[1] On the day of his death, and during the following night, a terrible hurricane swept over the realm of France, attended with great loss of life and destruction of property. The wind severely shook the house in which the dead body of the cardinal lay, and hurled to the ground more than a hundred adjacent houses. The fact that this tempest in reality occurred is attested by all contemporary historians. The Roman Catholic writers assert that it was significant of the wrath of God, who, therefore, removed at this juncture so able and holy a prelate from the evils accumulating: while contemporary Huguenot historians declare their belief that the hurricane denoted a devil's Sabbath; and happy was the soul, they assert, which took its flight on that day, for no conflict would it endure from evil spirits, as such were all gathered to hail the advent of their colleague, the arch-fiend Lorraine.

Charles cardinal de Lorraine occupies a chief place in the history of the great political leaders of the sixteenth century. None of his contemporaries equalled

[1] De Thou, liv. lix. De Serres: Recueil de Choses Mémorables. Le Labourcur: Discours sur la Vie de Henri III. Etoile: Journal de Henri III. La Popelinière. Brantôme: Eloge du Cardinal de Lorraine. The cardinal died aged fifty years; he was born February 17, 1529, and created a cardinal May 20, 1547. Again, the death of the cardinal was attributed to queen Catherine, as were most of the crimes and accidents of this epoch. It is said that, because he tried to induce Henry to espouse Louise de Lorraine, her majesty presented the prelate when at Lyons with a purse filled with rare gold coins, from the odour of which he died, as the purse had been immersed in a poisonous perfume.

him in prompt discernment and unflinching energy of action. His intellect was keen, supple, and insinuating; he knew how to plead a cause with the subtilty of the most skilled casuist; while he never suffered himself to be diverted from his intentions by argument or menace whatever. In his public capacity as a minister of state the cardinal de Lorraine was violent, vindictive, and unscrupulous. In prosperity his haughtiness was overbearing, in adversity his spirit lost none of its intrepidity. Two principles alone guided his administration—the extension of the papal power throughout France in matters purely ecclesiastical; and the aggrandizement of the princes of Lorraine, and their pre-eminence over all other aspirants for political power. To accomplish these objects the cardinal, during the reign of Francis II., grasped the sceptre with a power so fearless and comprehensive as to elicit amazement, and even applause, from the sternest despot of Europe, Philip II. of Spain. The annihilation of charters which interfered with his schemes of government; the assemblage at Orléans of all the powerful barons of France to compel at the sword's point their repudiation of the hateful heresy; the intended decapitation of one prince of the blood; the proscription of the race of Bourbon, and the exile of the queen-mother—were but fragments subsidiary to the stupendous designs of the cardinal during his palmy days, when Francis and Mary Stuart sat on the throne of France. When the government passed to the hands of Catherine de Medici, the cardinal with incomparable address succeeded in propitiating that astute princess. At Trent he advocated her ecclesiastical policy, while appearing to plead with fervour for the papacy. The cardinal's magnificent state and skilful assumptions secured him eminent distinction in that august assembly. These varied endowments were rendered almost irresistible by an eloquence of speech and

a vividness of idea such as France, before the sixteenth century, had never been called upon to applaud. The fervid oratory of the cardinal often carried all at his will; while in the pulpit his words thrilled on the consciences of his hearers, though the life of the prelate afforded no practical delineation of his doctrines. In the bishop of Valence alone the cardinal found a rival in the tribune; but even then, the varied knowledge of the gifted prelate, his accomplishments as a linguist, and the extent of his theological acquirements, still shone with a radiance which no efforts of his contemporaries could equal. The manners of the cardinal were courtly; he was ostentatious, liberal to profusion, and profligate in his morals. His patronage of art and literature was extensive and judicious, and won him many partisans in foreign lands. With Catherine the relations of the cardinal were confidential; and for the few years preceding his decease so close, that at one time a story prevailed similar to that circulated some eighty years later respecting Anne of Austria and cardinal Mazarin. Nevertheless, the queen never allowed her passions to dominate over the dictates of her judgment; and, whatever might be the amount of her private friendship for the cardinal de Lorraine, she ever repressed his ambitious soarings, and kept them in abeyance to what she considered to be the interests of the crown.

The decease of the cardinal de Lorraine produced a profound sensation at court, and especially overwhelmed queen Catherine. "We have lost the greatest man and most glorious intellect which France has ever beholden!" exclaimed her majesty. She, however, proceeded to dissect minutely the character of the cardinal, to whom she attributed much wickedness and ambition. The queen continued to converse respecting his loss during her dinner, discussing the probable effects of the cardinal's demise on the pending campaign against the

Huguenots. Catherine, about the middle of her repast, called for wine; as she took the cup from the hands of the duchesse de Nevers her majesty was observed to start, and to look fearfully towards one corner of the apartment. Catherine presently cried out that "she beheld M. le cardinal standing and gazing fixedly upon her!" and letting the cup drop, the queen covered her face with her hands. After a few minutes Catherine again shudderingly looked round; then with a sigh of relief she exclaimed, "No! I have no cause to fear the vision I have seen; nevertheless, be assured all of you that M. le cardinal has just passed me on his way, I hope, to paradise. I could almost see him ascend!" The impression made on the queen's mind, however, was profound; nor could she chase from her memory the perpetually recurring thought of her old ally—the sharer of her policy—of him whose daring had sustained the womanly misgivings and relentings which might have marred many a subtle project. For long subsequently Catherine fancied that at midnight she beheld the apparition beckoning her to follow. She wept and mourned; yet nightly the same pale features haunted her. Her women watched for weeks afterwards by the side of her couch, to allay by their presence the dread which often for hours deprived the queen of repose.[1]

About this period appeared the famed libel entitled 'Discours Merveilleux de la Vie de la Royne Catherine,'[2] in which the queen-mother was charged with the most abominable crimes; a parallel being drawn between Catherine and the famous Brunehaud, wife of Sigebert,

[1] Etoile: Journal de Henri III. Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite.

[2] This production, supposed to proceed from the pen of Henri Etienne, son of the celebrated printer, was called by the people 'Vie de Sainte Catherine.' It was subsequently translated into Latin, and appeared under the name of 'Legenda Beatæ Catherinæ.'—"La royne en rioit à gorge déployée," says Brantôme.

king of Metz. Catherine caused the libel to be read aloud in her presence, laughing very heartily at some of its stories, and aptly remarking "that it was a pity the author had not previously applied to her for information, as by his own statement, 'that it was impossible to fathom the depths of her Florentine deceit; or to estimate the extent of her ill-will towards the Huguenots,' it was evident he knew nothing of the events he pretended to discuss!"

END OF VOL. I.

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